

The Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) 1920–1937

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The Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) 1920–1937

By

Reiner Tosstorff

Translated by

Ben Fowkes



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Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale 1920–1937
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It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,
it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness,
it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity,
it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness,
it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair,
we had everything before us, we had nothing before us,
we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.

– CHARLES DICKENS, *A Tale of Two Cities*

• • •

Without contraries is no progression.

– WILLIAM BLAKE, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

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Frankfurt am Main
April 2004

Abbreviations

AAU	<i>Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union</i> [General Workers' Union]
ACAT	<i>Asociación Continental Americana de los Trabajadores</i> [Association of Workers of the American Continent]
ACTU	From 1927 to 1947: Australasian Council of Trade Unions From 1947 onwards: Australian Council of Trade Unions
ACW	Amalgamated Clothing Workers
ACWA	Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America
ADGB	<i>Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund</i> [General German Trade Union Confederation]
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union
AfA	<i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft freier Angestelltenverbände</i> [Cooperative Union of Free Salaried Employees' Associations]
AFL (1)	American Federation of Labor
AFL (2)	<i>Arbeidernes faglige landsorganisasjon</i> [Workers' National Trade Union]
ASE	Amalgamated Society of Engineers
AUCP (B)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
AWU	Auto Workers' Union
BSP	British Socialist Party
CCN	<i>Comité Confédéral National</i> [National Federal Committee]
CGL	<i>Confederazione Generale del Lavoro</i> [General Confederation of Labour]
CGOCM	<i>Confederación General de Obreros y Campesinos Mexicanos</i> [General Confederation of Mexican Workers and Peasants]
CGT [P]	<i>Confederação Geral do Trabalho</i> [General Confederation of Labour] (Portugal)
CGT 1	<i>Confédération Générale du Travail</i> [General Confederation of Labour] (France)
CGT 2	<i>Confederación General de Trabajadores</i> [General Confederation of Workers] (Mexico)
CGTSR	CGT <i>Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire</i> [CGT: Revolutionary Syndicalist]
CGTU	<i>Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire</i> [General United Confederation of Labour]
CI	Communist International
CIO 1	Congress of Industrial Organizations
CIO 2	Committee of Industrial Organizations
CLN	<i>Comitati di Liberazione Nazionale</i> [Committees of National Liberation]
CNT	<i>Confederación Nacional del Trabajo</i> [National Confederation of Labour]
COPA	<i>Confederación Obrera Pan-Americana</i> [Pan-American Workers' Confederation]

CPN	Communist Party of the Netherlands
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPUSA	Communist Party of the United States of America
CROM	<i>Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana</i> [Regional Mexican Workers' Confederation]
CSLA	<i>Confederación Sindical Latinoamericana</i> [Latin American Trade Union Confederation]
CSR 1	<i>Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires</i> [Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees] (France)
CSR 2	<i>Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios</i> [Revolutionary Syndicalist Committees] (Spain)
CSUM	<i>Confederación Sindical Unitaria de México</i> [United Trade Union Confederation of Mexico]
CTM	<i>Confederación de Trabajadores de México</i> [Mexican Confederation of Workers]
DEV	<i>Deutscher Eisenbahner-Verband</i> [Union of German Railway Workers]
DIV	<i>Deutscher Industrieverband</i> [German Industrial Association]
DMV	<i>Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband</i> [Union of German Metalworkers]
DNA	<i>Det norske Arbeiderparti</i> [The Norwegian Workers' Party]
ECCI	Executive Committee of the Communist International
FAU	<i>Freie Arbeiter-Union</i> [Free Workers' Union]
FAUD (S)	<i>Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Syndikalistin)</i> [Free Workers' Union of Germany (Syndicalists)]
FAUD	<i>Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands</i> [Free Workers' Union of Germany]
FAU-G	<i>Freie Arbeiter-Union (Gelsenkirchen)</i> [Free Workers' Union – Gelsenkirchen]
FDGB	<i>Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund</i> [Free German Trade Union Confederation]
FES	<i>Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung</i> [Friedrich Ebert Foundation]
FIOM	<i>Federazione Italiana Operai Metallurgici</i> [Italian Federation of Workers Employed in the Metal Industry]
FIOM	<i>Federazione Italiana Operai Metallurgici</i> [Italian Metal Workers Federation]
FORA IX. Congress	FORA, Ninth Congress (Argentina)
FORA V. Congress	FORA, Fifth Congress (Argentina)
FORA	<i>Federación Obrera Regional Argentina</i> [Regional Workers' Federation of Argentina]
FSR	<i>Frazione sindacalista rivoluzionaria</i> [Revolutionary Syndicalist Fraction]
FVDG	<i>Freie Vereinigung der deutschen Gewerkschaften</i> [Free Association of German Trade Unions]

GARF	<i>Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii</i> [State Archive of the Russian Federation]
GEB	General Executive Board
GFTU	General Federation of Trade Unions
IAM	International Association of Machinists
IAV	<i>Internationaler Allgewerkschaftlicher Verband</i> (see also MVS)
IFBSOLW	International Federation of Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers
IFTU	International Federation of Trade Unions
ILGWU	International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
ILO 1	International Labour Organisation
ILO 2	International Labour Office
ILP	Independent Labour Party
IMB	<i>Internationaler Metallarbeiter-Bund</i> [International Metalworkers' Federation]
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation
<i>Inprekorr</i>	<i>Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz</i> [Comintern periodical]
IPAC	International Propaganda and Action Committee
IPC	International Propaganda Committee
IS	International Secretariat
ISF	International Seafarers' Federation
ISH	International of Seamen and Harbour Workers
ITF	International Transport Workers' Federation
ITS	International Trade Secretariat
ITUC	International Trade Union Council
IUF	International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades (see also IUL)
IUH	<i>Internationale Union der Holzarbeiter</i> (see also IUW)
IUL	<i>Internationale Union der Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen der Lebensmittel und Genußmittelindustrie</i> (see also IUF)
IUW	International Union of Woodworkers
IWMA 1	International Working Men's Association [First International]
IWMA 2	International Working Men's Association [Syndicalist]
IWW	Industrial Workers of the World
KAG	<i>Kommunistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft</i> [Communist Working Group]
KAPD	<i>Kommunistische Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands</i> [Communist Workers' Party of Germany]
KI	<i>Die Kommunistische Internationale</i> [Comintern periodical]
KPD	<i>Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands</i> [Communist Party of Germany]
KPO	<i>Kommunistische Partei – Opposition</i>
KSČ	<i>Komunistická strana Československa</i> [Communist Party of Czechoslovakia]

LWIU	Lumber Workers' Industrial Union
MEB	<i>Mitteleuropäisches Büro</i> [Central European Bureau]
MRC	Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick
MTWIU	Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union
MVS	<i>Mezinárodní Všeodborový Svaz</i> [International All-Trade Union Confederation]
N.S.	New Style
NAC	National Administrative Council
NAFTA	National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades' Association
NAS	<i>Nationaal Arbeids-Sekretariaat van Nederland</i> [National Labour Secretariat of the Netherlands]
NFT	<i>Nederlandsche Federatie van Transportarbeiders</i> [Dutch Federation of Transport Workers]
NMM	National Minority Movement
NVV	<i>Nederlandsch Verbond van Vakverenigen</i> [Dutch Association of Trade Unions]
OBUE	One Big Union (Canada)
OMS	<i>Otdel Mezhdunarodnoi Sviazi</i> [Department of International Communications]
OSČ (before 1918)	<i>Odborové sdružení československé</i> [Czechoslovak Trade Union Association]
OSČ (after 1918)	<i>Odborové sdružení československé</i> [Czechoslovak Trade Union Association]
PAFL	Pan-American Federation of Labor
PCE	<i>Partido Comunista de España</i> [Communist Party of Spain]
PCF	<i>Parti Communiste Français</i> [French Communist Party]
PCI	<i>Partito Comunista Italiano</i> [Italian Communist Party]
POUM	<i>Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista</i> [Workers' Party of Marxist Unification]
PSI	<i>Partito Socialista Italiano</i> [Italian Socialist Party]
PSOE	<i>Partido Socialista Obrero Español</i> [Spanish Socialist Workers' Party]
PSU	<i>Partito Socialista Unitario</i> [Socialist Unity Party]
PTTI	Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International
RCP (b)	Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
RF	<i>Die Rote Fahne</i> [KPD newspaper]
RGASPI	<i>Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Sotsial'noi i Politicheskoi Istorii</i> [Russian State Archive of Social and Political History]
RGÖ	<i>Revolutionäre Gewerkschafts-Opposition</i> [Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition]
RGZ	<i>Reichsgewerkschaftszentrale</i> [National Trade Union Centre]

RILU	Red International of Labour Unions
ROSTA	<i>Rossiiskoe Telegrafnoe Agentstvo</i> [Russian Telegraph Agency]
RSDWP	Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party
RSFSR	Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic
RTUO	Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition
SAC	<i>Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation</i> [Central Organisation of the Workers of Sweden]
SAP	<i>Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei</i> [Socialist Workers' Party]
SAPMO	<i>Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv</i> [Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR in the Federal Archives]
SDAP	<i>Sociaal Democratische Arbeiders Partij</i> [Social Democratic Workers' Party]
SED	<i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i> [Socialist Unity Party of Germany]
SFIO	<i>Section française de l'Internationale ouvrière</i> [French Section of the Workers' International]
SGB	<i>Schweizerischer Gewerkschaftsbund</i> [Swiss Trade Union Confederation]
SLP 1	Socialist Labor Party (USA)
SLP 2	Socialist Labour Party (UK)
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> [Social Democratic Party of Germany]
SR Party	Socialist Revolutionary Party
SWMF	South Wales Miners' Federation
TGWU	Transport and General Workers' Union
TUC	Trades Union Congress
TUEL	Trade Union Educational League
TUUL	Trade Union Unity League
UAI	<i>Unione Anarchica Italiana</i> [Union of Italian Anarchists]
UdHuK	<i>Union der Hand und Kopfarbeiter</i> [Union of Workers by Hand and Brain]
UGT	<i>Unión General de Trabajadores</i> [General Workers' Union]
UIL	<i>Unione Italiana del Lavoro</i> [Italian Labour Union]
ULC	United Labor Council
UMW	United Mine Workers of America
USI	<i>Unione sindacale italiana</i> [Italian Union of Syndicalists]
USPD	<i>Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> [Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany]
VHTL	<i>Verband der Handels-, Transport- und Lebensmittelarbeiter</i> [Union of Workers in Commerce, Transport and the Food Industry]
Vikzhel	<i>Vserossiiskii Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet Soiuza Zheleznodorozhnikov</i> [All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railway Workers]

VKPD	<i>Vereinigte Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands</i> [United Communist Party of Germany]
VSRM	<i>Vserossiiskii (Vsesoiuznyi) Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov</i> [All-Russian (All-Union) Union of Metalworkers]
VSRPM	<i>Vserossiiskii (Vsesoiuznyi) Soiuz Rabochikh Pishchevoi i Vkusnevoi Promishlenosti</i> [All-Russian (All-Union) Union of Food and Drink Workers]
VTsIK	<i>Vserossiiskii Tsentral'nyi Iсполnitel'nyi Komitet</i> [All-Russian Central Executive Committee]
VTsSPS	<i>Vserossiiskii (Vsesoiuznyi) Tsentral'nyi Sovet Professional'nykh Soiuzov</i> [All-Russian (All-Union) Central Council of Trade Unions]
WES	<i>Westeuropäisches Sekretariat</i> [Western European Secretariat]
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
WIIU	Workers' International Industrial Union
ZA	<i>Zentralausschuss</i> [Central Commission]
ZK	<i>Zentralkomitee</i> [Central Committee]

Introduction

The Red International of Labour Unions (English abbreviation RILU, German abbreviation RGI, and in Russian *Krasnyi Internatsional' Profsoiuzov*, or 'Profin-tern' for short, by analogy with 'Comintern') was the organisational expression at the international level of communist trade-union activities. It has been treated in a very niggardly fashion in recent historiography. Even though it claimed to play an independent role internationally, it almost always shows up in the literature as a subsidiary aspect of the history of the Communist International, which embraced the communist parties of the world.¹

Its significance has been evaluated in extremely diverse ways. According to Geoffrey Swain, 'The RILU will never be more than a footnote in the history of the labour movement – it never amounted to much'.² As against this, one could argue, along with E.H. Carr, that 'the Red International of Trade Unions (RILU) was in the 1920s by far the most powerful and important of the auxiliary organisations which gravitated around the Comintern. It was, indeed, the only one which could claim some independence, and it was more than a mere subsidiary organ'.³ Whereas Swain bases his evaluation on the failure of the RILU to construct an influential communist trade-union movement in Germany, a country to which he ascribes a strategic significance for the RILU leadership in view of Germany's key role in the Bolsheviks' strategy for revolution, Carr, in contrast, concentrates on 'the large organisation of the RILU and its extensive representation abroad, in which it far surpassed any of the other auxiliaries [of the Comintern]'.⁴

In any case, the significance of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) for the organisational development of the international communist movement is indubitable: it was, with its national sections, an important means of anchoring and deepening the influence of communism in the trade-union movement, hence in the organised working class, which after all was supposed to represent the social basis for the communist movement itself. Moreover, it also provided a supply of cadres for the communist parties. This was not

1 An example of this is the three sentences devoted to it in Meyer 1986, p. 327, in the article 'Kommunistische Internationale'. It is also mentioned in two other places in that publication: under the headings 'Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund' (p. 273) and 'RGO' (p. 533).

2 Geoffrey Swain 1987, 'Was the RILU Really Necessary?', *European History Quarterly*, 1: 57–77, here p. 73.

3 Carr 1972, p. 974.

4 Ibid.

unimportant. Finally, from the point of view of the relationship between the Bolsheviks and the revolutionary Syndicalists, it had a completely independent significance. The latter, alongside the numerically stronger left of Social Democracy, which unquestionably had a greater political influence, constituted the other major root of the communist movement, not only in Southern Europe but also in the USA and Latin America. This point has often been ignored. The RILU was the road along which the Syndicalists travelled towards communism. And Syndicalism certainly played a part in moulding some of the positions adopted by the communist movement towards trade-union questions.

It was the encounter between the Syndicalists and the Bolsheviks which gave the first impulse towards the founding of the RILU, because such an organisation was not originally envisaged by them; it did not form part of the communist conception of the role of the trade unions. Of course, this only represented a starting-point for the organisation. The aim of the present work is to combine an investigation of the relationship between the Syndicalists and the Communists with an examination of the general question of organised communist influence in the whole of the international trade-union movement, in which the Syndicalists after all only formed a minority. For this reason, it has been impossible to avoid discussing other international trade-union organisations, and above all the International Federation of Trade Unions (abbreviated IFTU, and known as the Amsterdam International, because its headquarters were in that city), as well as the International Trade Secretariats (ITSS) of the individual craft unions attached to it. These organisations, with their historical roots in the years before the First World War, represented the dominant force in the international trade-union movement, and they provided at the same time, through their reformist objectives, essential backing for Social Democracy, the main opponent of communism in the international workers' movement.

The RILU was originally conceived as a kind of 'alliance' between Syndicalists and Communists, and for this reason it immediately took up the struggle against the IFTU, adopting the slogan 'Moscow or Amsterdam' and making this the main point of conflict in the disputes within the international trade-union movement of the interwar period. After the postwar wave of revolution went down to defeat and the period of 'frontal attack' ended, the Communist International started to speak of a 'united front'. But the RILU turned out to present a considerable organisational obstacle to the implementation of this policy. Its very existence strengthened the fissiparous tendencies which had emerged out of political differences in the workers' movement since the First World War. Very soon, therefore, a curious duality arose: the RILU continued its activities, but these went hand in hand with attempts on the part of the communists to get rid of it, as long as this could be done without incurring too

great a political cost. The situation was made yet more complex by the fact that moves to dissolve it met with fierce resistance on the part of the RILU apparatus, for reasons of bureaucratic self-preservation, so to speak, which were led by the General Secretary of the organisation, Alexander Lozovsky. And not only that. The matter was also bound up with the factional struggles of the 1920s within the Bolshevik Party. Stalin's victory appeared at first to give an added impulse to the RILU, but its new role after 1929 as a protagonist ultimately turned out to be purely theoretical. In the constellation of international forces which developed in the mid-1930s, the RILU again became an obstacle to Soviet endeavours to secure alliances, and it was quietly dissolved, its passing scarcely noticed.

Previous discussions of this theme have in general borne the imprint of the political conflicts of the time. It is only very recently that the history of international trade-union organisations has become the subject of scientific investigation. Previously their history was written in order to nurture the traditions of the organisations themselves, and in a correspondingly affirmative spirit. The aim was to confirm and justify the existence of these organisations and the policies pursued by them, and also, in particular, to criticise their respective competitors. The historians in question therefore scarcely troubled to peruse any other sources than the organisations' own proclamations. The same thing also applied to their presentation of the opposing organisations, except that the signs were now reversed.

This point stands out very clearly in the case of the historiography of the RILU. The contemporary conflict between 'Amsterdam' and 'Moscow' constituted the first phase of its history, and it was characterised to a very considerable degree by polemical confrontation. A glaring example of this was the book written by Paul Olberg,⁵ which was the first attempt at an overall presentation of the subject. It was published by the Union of German Metal Workers. The essays in the *Internationales Handwörterbuch des Gewerkschaftswesens*,⁶ on the other hand, which throw light on the role of the RILU as a part of the international trade-union movement of the time, take a more scientific approach.

Numerous overall studies of the international trade-union movement have been written by a series of officials of the international movement of the time or by their successors (for instance Edo Fimmen, Johannes Sassenbach, Hans Gottfurcht and Walter Schevenels),⁷ and they provide some details on the RILU's history. They were mainly written for trade-union educational work, and

5 *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale und die europäische Arbeiterbewegung*, Stuttgart, 1930.

6 Edited by Ludwig Heyde, Berlin, from 1931 onwards.

7 Fimmen 1922; Sassenbach 1926; Gottfurcht 1962; Schevenels 1965.

they are based on very limited source material, but their presentations of the subject do at least give some insight into the attitude adopted by the RILU's contemporary Social Democratic opponents. Even so, they provide no more than a few indications of the direction a genuinely scientific study based on the original sources might take. They are therefore of only marginal assistance, and in some cases I have not used them at all. The same can be said of Lewis Lorwin's book, although this admittedly aims to give a more comprehensive treatment.⁸ Andreu Nin's presentation of the subject,⁹ written from a diametrically opposite political vantage point, at least provides a few details on his own activity as a former Deputy General Secretary of the RILU. In addition, there is material from the RILU itself, and particularly from its General Secretary, the above-mentioned Lozovsky, for the organisation was not slow to present its work in a series of publications.¹⁰

After 1945, given the dissolution of the RILU eight years previously, the subject became genuinely historical in character, even if it continued to be politically controversial. It was naturally in Eastern Europe that the greatest degree of attention was paid to the subject. Since the 1960s, a number of presentations of the RILU have been produced in the East, covering either the whole of its history or large chunks of its development. As was to be expected, these studies essentially took their line from the RILU's own view of its role, that is to say they relied on its official statements, which were in addition subject to a considerable degree of 'straightening out' as far as the 1920s were concerned. This involved the removal from the story of aspects which had become unwelcome and of people who were now disliked. Moreover, the organisational aspects of the RILU's development were now minimised, or entirely blotted out. Even so, since the RILU archives were available from 1970s onwards to this group of historians, albeit subject to some restrictions, interesting details can be gleaned from a number of these books, and I have made use of them in the present study.¹¹

8 Lorwin 1930.

9 Nin 1978 [1933].

10 For example, Lozovsky 1924; *Desiat' let Profintern v rezoliutsiakh* 1930 and *Desiat' let Profintern* 1930. The indispensable bibliographies produced by Thomas T. Hammond (1965, pp. 983–95) and Witold S. Sworakowski (1965, pp. 358–401) provide pointers to other publications and of course above all to the sources. The RILU bibliography started by Giorgi Milardi, on the other hand, did not get beyond its first section, unfortunately (see Milardi 1967, pp. 325–437). For RILU publications in Germany, however, we do have a valuable overview (Goldbeck 1987).

11 This applies particularly to the work of historians attached to the University of Saratov,

In Western historiography there was a boom in studies of the workers' movement, including the history of communism, which began in the 1960s, although interest waned in the subsequent decades. The only large-scale work which aimed to examine the RILU as a whole, if only in its initial years, has unfortunately remained unpublished (although it is accessible).¹² In addition, the relevant sections of E.H. Carr's monumental history of the Soviet Union allow one to gain a certain kind of overall picture.¹³ These volumes, which were closely oriented to the published sources, constitute without doubt the most well-founded treatment that had been published on the topic. For the earliest phase of the RILU, involving the disputes with the Syndicalists, the important contributions by Wayne Thorpe should also be mentioned.¹⁴

All the references so far given – to which one could add a number of narrower studies, mostly journal articles – relate to the organisation at an international level. There is however a much more extensive literature which treats the RILU within the framework of Comintern history, and also, above all, examines the RILU in specific national contexts, whether within the framework of individual communist parties' trade-union policies, or as part of the general trade-union history of the country in question (relevant examples of this are treatments of the Anglo-Russian Committee, and of the split of 1921–2 in the French CGT). Studies of this kind are particularly appropriate where the RILU section in question consisted predominantly of communist trade-union fractions working within Social Democratic trade unions. There are, however, very

such as B.A. Karpachev, Iu.G. Golub and V.P. Shilovich (see the Bibliography for details of their books and articles), several of which were published at the end of the 1980s, in the early stages of *Glasnost'*. G.M. Adibekov's 1981 book, however (*Profintern: politika kommunistov v profsoiuznom dvizhenii*), almost completely ignores the internal history of the RILU, and is restricted to reconstructing the party line while excluding details of a problematic nature. Admittedly, the author did present an interesting self-criticism ten years later in the journal *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, describing the way censorship as well as self-censorship operated at that time. This Soviet literature has been drawn on to the extent that it provides useful pointers. For linguistic reasons, however, it was not possible to follow up the bibliographical references to a number of works produced in other countries of Eastern Europe, such as: Aleksander Kochański, *Czerwony Międzynarodówka Związków (Profintern), 1920–1937*, Warsaw, 1985; Gabor Szekely, *Profintern-kronika. A Vörös Szakszervezeti Internacionálé kongresszusainak és a központi tanács ülészakainak kronikája*, Budapest 1982; Nencho Dimov, *Profinternat i balkanskoto profsajuzno dvizhenie*, Sofia 1976.

12 Albert Resis 1964, 'The Profintern: Origins to 1923', PhD Thesis, Columbia University.

13 See the references in the Bibliography to the volumes of Carr's *A History of Soviet Russia* we have made use of.

14 Thorpe 1989; Thorpe 1996.

few monographs which specifically combine a treatment of national RILU sections with an examination of their relationship with the international organisation.¹⁵

All this literature has of course been drawn on where it provides important details or insights. The main reason why in general the role of the RILU as an international organisation has been a marginal theme is certainly the fact that until 1992 the archives which remained in Moscow after the RILU's dissolution were not generally accessible.

An essential prerequisite for my decision to risk making this presentation of the whole history of the RILU was the opening of the Soviet archives, first and foremost the archives of the RILU itself, which were transferred to the Comintern after the RILU was dissolved, and then after the Comintern ceased to exist ended up in the Central Party Archive in Moscow.¹⁶ These archives themselves required to be supplemented by useful material housed in other places, such as the archives of the Russian Trade Unions and the Communist International, as well as the SED Archive in Berlin. It would also be wrong to ignore the extensive 'literary' production of the RILU. Its publications, which can be viewed in a number of specialist libraries, represented an equally indispensable source for this study.

The RILU was an organisation with international aspirations and a range of objectives that corresponded to this. Its activities were so far-flung that it is impossible to trace out the full details of its history here. The key points of the present work are indicated by the development of the organisation itself. Certain aspects of the RILU's work gained significance by being the subject of debates in the leadership, and by occupying a central position in its meetings and internal discussions. It is above all these aspects which will be illuminated here. A further criterion for the choice of key points of investigation was the degree to which a particular development sparked off conflict with the RILU's rival in Amsterdam. In view of this, it made sense to supplement the RILU archive with materials from the archives of the trade unions of the West.

The analysis and presentation of the RILU's history is of relevance to research on communism, to an understanding of the organisation as a part of the international communist movement, and also, and perhaps to an even greater

15 For example, see McDermott 1988; Foner 1991; and Foner 1994.

16 After 1992, this was renamed the 'Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Recent Historical Documents' [*Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniia i Izucheniiia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii – RTsKhIDNI*]. Since 1999, it has been known as the Russian State Archive for Social and Political History [*Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennii Arkhiv Sotsial'noi i Politicheskoi Istorii – RGASPI*].

degree, to the history of international trade unionism, and of the role of the RILU as an international trade-union organisation. Both of these aspects – the communist one and the trade-union one – need to be treated in tandem. The present investigation includes the whole period of the RILU's existence. It therefore begins in 1920 with the foundation of its immediate predecessor, the International Trade Union Council – the RILU was not established formally until the next year – and it stretches right up to its dissolution in 1937, although it had not in fact been active in a practical sense for two years before that.

Generally speaking, this work follows a chronological pattern, but its form is at first sight surprising, although the points made earlier about the RILU may serve to explain why this is so. We begin with a sketch of the historical preliminaries, that is to say the development of international trade unionism, and follow this with an extended treatment of the RILU's origin and the earliest phase of its development. Only in this period did the RILU have something of a distinctive character. In proportion to the Syndicalists' loss of influence within it, the RILU's independence declined progressively so that it became just one of many communist organisations subordinated to the broader leadership of the movement. It became less and less significant, even though the RILU apparatus itself made repeated attempts to raise its status. The later years of the RILU will only be given cursory treatment here, except where such endeavours had a real impact. Our presentation of the RILU's development will thus be shaped like an onion, so that it grows thinner in the later years in line with the narrowing of its area of independent effectiveness, although again right at the top there is a certain amount of thickening which corresponds to the way the debate over its dissolution moved back and forth for some time.

The depth of treatment allotted to particular stages of the RILU's history therefore reflects variations in the importance we ascribe to the overall course of the RILU's development. It is therefore not a history of communist trade-union work 'in itself'. A history of that kind would more properly be located at the national level, in an investigation on a country-by-country basis of the impact of communism on trade-union movements. The need to keep the length of the work within reasonable limits – not to mention the extensive additional research that would have been required – also made it impossible to examine in detail the history of individual sections of the RILU, in other words its subordinate organisations such as the International of Seaman and Harbour Workers or the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, among others. That would certainly be an interesting task, and worth pursuing. To sum up, then, this book aims to display the Red International of Trade Unions at work wherever and whenever it steps forth as an independent historical factor.

Author's Note

The basis for this book is the text of the thesis the author wrote for his *Habilitation*. It has been checked through and supplemented at some points. We have cut out a chapter on the international connections of the Russian trade unions before 1914, which has already been published elsewhere in the meantime, as indicated in the Bibliography.

The customary scholarly system of transliteration from the Russian has been employed in general, with the exception of a few personal names and concepts, such as Bolshevism, Trotsky, and so on, which have already entered the language. The same applies to the small number of Chinese personal names and place names.

Quotations from archive materials are referenced in the manner customary in Soviet, or as the case may be, Russian archives: the first number indicates the '*fond*', that is to say the particular archive collection to which reference is being made, the second number is needed to indicate the catalogue (*opis'*), since a collection may well have several catalogues. The third and final number indicates the file containing documents on a particular subject (*delo*). The archive materials are normally in numbered folio pages. If the page number is missing in some source references, this is because – under a system whose principles are unfathomable – some of the material could not be examined in the original but only on microfilms on which the page numbers could not be deciphered. But even in these cases the references given are sufficient to allow the source to be identified. Every reference to an archival source is of course preceded by the name of the relevant archive. This also applies to the *Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv* (SAPMO).

From Trade Union Internationalism to the International Federation of Trade Unions

Trade-union internationalism existed long before anyone had the idea of setting up a trade-union international.¹ Like all the forms of internationalism which emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century, it had its precursors in the democratic movements that were formed following the French Revolution of 1789.² The central point of this internationalism was the universal interest of humanity in creating republican and liberal nations; it was thus based on common ideals. Shortly afterwards, the first workers' associations began to emerge, along with socialist ideas, and these developments raised the question of the common social interests of the new class which was being produced in a number of countries by industrialisation: the class of wage-earners.

Numerous contacts were established between the supporters of the various socialist schools of thought and political movements in France, Britain and Germany – in the German case this happened first and foremost in exile – and the question of international organisation was already being discussed on the eve of the 1848 revolutions. The 'Communist Manifesto' drawn up by Marx and Engels was the most precise theoretical expression of this phenomenon.³

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- 1 This point was correctly made in a recent contribution by Jean-Marie Demaldent (1990, p. 19). In the present work, we have adopted the definition of trade unions given by the Webbs in the revised edition of their classic study of the history of the British trade-union movement (which explicitly altered the formulation given in the first edition produced in 1894): 'A trade union, as we understand the term, is a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their working lives'. They explained their change in a footnote, as follows: 'In the first edition we said "of their employment". This has been objected to as implying that trade unions have always contemplated a perpetual continuance of the capitalist or wage-system. No such implication was intended. Trade unions have, at various dates during the past century at any rate, frequently had aspirations towards a revolutionary change in social and economic relations' (Sidney and Beatrice Webb 1920, p. 1).
 - 2 Where not otherwise indicated, the present sketch is based on the following works: Lewis Lorwin 1930; Susan Milner 1990; and Ina Hermes 1979. For the historical and theoretical origins of internationalism, see also Friedemann and Hölscher 1982, pp. 367–97; and Hobsbawm 1988, pp. 3–16.
 - 3 Of course, the Manifesto only mentions workers' 'associations' and 'combinations' in passing. Even the description 'Trade Unions' was not present in the original. It was added in 1888 by

The defeat of the European revolution initially pushed the political form of working-class organisation advocated by Marx and Engels into the background. They had to accept that, for years to come, they would be faced with a greatly restricted field of activity on the European continent. In contrast to this, the more democratic and at the same time more economically advanced conditions in Great Britain (as also on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean) allowed a broad trade-union movement to emerge, and this proved to be a powerful instrument for improving the situation of at least the skilled workers. In fact the next impulse for the creation of an international workers' organisation originated from this part of the world. Moreover, a large number of political exiles had found refuge in London, and they also influenced this process.⁴ Here too we find the first use of the word 'international' in connection with the workers' movement, in the shape of the 'International Committee' set up in London in 1855, which was renamed the 'International Association' in the following year.⁵

But the idea of an International did not find expression in an actual organisation until the impulse was provided by the employers' decision to import strike-breakers from the Continent, in reaction to the London building workers' strike of 1858. The leaders of the London trade unions responded to this in two ways. They joined together in a regional association, which later provided the foundation for the establishment in 1868 of a nationwide organisation, the Trades Union Congress, and they sought out international connections by making an appeal to the workers of Continental Europe. Their internationalism thus had highly practical and material motives. It was aimed above all at counteracting weaknesses in each nation's individual labour movement.⁶

The main external contacts they made were with French workers, but political exiles in London also played an important part in the process which led in September 1864 to the formation of the International Working Men's Association (later described as the First International), which was the first relatively broad international workers' organisation. Organisations of several different

Engels when a new edition was brought out. The lack of any reference to these bodies was however entirely appropriate to the contemporary situation in 1848, since it was not the trade unions but the British Chartists and the French socialists who set the political direction of the workers' movement of their countries. (See 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, 1976, pp. 492–3).

4 On this point, see, 'The Forerunners of the International', which is Part One, Section Three of Rothstein 1983 [1929], pp. 124–82.

5 Friedemann and Hölscher 1982, p. 377.

6 See, for example, Milner 1990, p. 16.

kinds were united together in this association. It included both trade unions and political groups, and there were also people who joined on an individual basis. The most varied schools of political thought were represented in it: alongside Marx and Engels there were supporters of Anarchism like Proudhon and Bakunin, there were Blanquists, and there were the radical democrats who followed Mazzini.

This is not the place to discuss the history of the first International Working Men's Association (IWMA). Here we shall simply refer to its significance for the development of the international trade-union movement. Its historical importance consisted in large part in its propagation of the idea that trade unions were a valuable part of the workers' movement. This was by no means a matter of course at that time, on the Continent at least. Karl Marx was the most eloquent advocate of this conception. In discussions on the General Council of the IWMA between May and August 1865, he defended the idea that it was both possible and necessary to improve the workers' situation through trade-union organisation against critics who thought this was fundamentally impossible and for the most part recommended instead that the workers should struggle to set up co-operatives.⁷ All the congresses of the First International called explicitly for the creation of trade-union organisations, as well as the establishment of international connections between them, while at the same time putting forward an extensive programme of demands for the protection of the workers. Their main objective in this respect was the limitation of the working day, on the model of the earlier struggle for the Ten Hours' Act in Britain.⁸

The First International came to grief on the disagreements between Anarchists and Marxists which were sharpened by the defeat of the Paris Commune.

7 Marx's report of June 1865 to the Central Council on this subject was issued after his death by his daughter Eleanor Marx-Aveling under the title 'Value, Price and Profit' (Marx 1985 [1865], pp. 103–49). The report ended with these words: 'Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachments of capital. They fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system' (Marx 1985 [1865], p. 149).

8 When the first congress of the IWMA was held in Geneva in 1866, the importance of trade unions was stressed in writing by Marx (he was unable to attend the congress). He also insisted that the unions should take up the struggle for the removal of capitalism. At the next two congresses, held in Lausanne in 1867 and Brussels in 1868, there were conflicts with the followers of Proudhon, who opposed strike action, calling instead for the setting up of co-operatives and credit banks. On these points, see Demaldent 1990, pp. 21–9. For the documents relating to these congresses, see Freymond 1962, vol. 1.

After that, the centre of attention of the workers' movement shifted again to the creation of national organisations, both political parties and trade unions. The attempts that were made at various congresses held in the 1870s and 1880s to restore international co-operation were unsuccessful, initially because of the continuing conflict between Anarchists and Marxists and later on because of disagreements between the British trade unionists and the socialists of the European Continent. Not until 1889, as a result of the growing influence of Marxist tendencies, headed by the German Social Democrats (the SPD), was it possible for the foundations to be laid at a congress in Paris for what was later described as the Second International, despite competition from a rival congress of trade unionists and moderate socialists which was being held at the same time. No permanent organisation was created at first. Instead of this, there were simply periodic congresses. These were described as 'International Socialist and Workers' Congresses' in those early years, a title which indicates the twin pillars on which the Second International rested: the parties and the trade unions.

The congresses of the Second International were at first dominated by continuing confrontations between Anarchists and Marxists, and between British trade unionists and European socialists, which formed a pendant, as it were, to the struggles which ended the First International. The controversies of the 1890s led the non-Marxist currents, which were mainly under trade-union influence, to break with the Second International. Not for nothing did the congresses meet under a different name after 1900. Now they were International Socialist Congresses, although right up to the First World War representatives of trade unions (admittedly they were exclusively Social Democratic and Marxist in orientation) took part alongside the delegates of the parties.

One should nevertheless note the significance of the Second International, particularly in its early years, for the rise of trade unionism in Continental Europe. It was not just that it placed the fight for the Eight Hour Day at the centre of the workers' movement, initiating the tradition of using the first day of May each year as the date for international demonstrations for that aim. Congresses of the Second International also stressed the need for trade-union organisation, calling for the individual national trade unions to strengthen themselves by joining together to form a central body, and to co-operate on an international scale.⁹

9 The Brussels Congress of 1891, for instance, declared that 'the Congress regards the organisation of the working class in trade unions as an urgent necessity for conducting such struggles, so as to be able to achieve its aims both through the weight of numbers and the provision

It was in fact the congresses of the Second International which offered an opportunity to raise international co-operation between trade unions representing the workers of particular trades to a new level.¹⁰ It is true, there had been initial attempts made in certain strongly craft-oriented branches of employment in the 1860s and 1870s. Evidence of this has survived for a range of trades: the glove-makers, the tobacco-workers, the potters, the glassworkers, the furriers, the printers, the bookbinders and the hatters. But all these first forms of organisation quickly died out, not without active help from governments which felt threatened. On the European Continent, it was first necessary for central trade-union organisations to establish themselves, whereas in Britain the trade unions had already achieved a relatively strong position, so that they were not particularly dependent on international co-operation.

In this respect, the Second International proved to be a catalyst, with its periodic congresses. Delegates from different trades met there and established international connections. This happened, for example, with the carpenters in 1891 in Brussels, and with the metal-workers and the railway-workers in 1893 in Zürich. The hatters were also able to restore their previous links at the Zürich congress. In some cases, on the other hand, organisations were founded without any involvement by the congresses of the Second International. This was true of co-operation among the miners, where the Miners' Federation of Great Britain played an important part. The International Miners' Federation was founded independently in this way in 1890 in Belgium.

As a result of these efforts, seventeen international organisations were formed in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and it became customary to describe them as International Trade Secretariats (ITSS). Some of them, however, ceased their activities a short time later, or merged with others, reducing the number of permanent secretariats to thirteen.¹¹ The functions of most of them were restricted to exchanging information and occasionally mount-

of material assistance ... And a central organisation of all the forces of the international working class would be very desirable, although at present all sorts of obstacles are preventing this' (*Verhandlungen des Kongresses* 1893, p. 23). This point was reaffirmed by the next two congresses in more detailed resolutions, which now underlined the need for the trade unions to establish international connections (*Protokoll des Kongresses* 1894, p. 51; *Verhandlungen des Kongresses* 1896, pp. 27–9). On this in general, see Hermes 1979.

10 The following remarks on the establishment of the International Trade Secretariats are based on these sources: *Neunter Internationaler Bericht* 1912, pp. 234–319; *Zehnter Internationaler Bericht* 1913, pp. 255–355; Kulemann 1913, pp. 234–305; *Die Internationalen Beziehungen* 1914, pp. 5, 17–121; Golub 1994, pp. 39–51.

11 Golub 1994, p. 53.

ing international support actions. There was still a long way to go before the creation of a proper international association, able to conduct international campaigns.

Another, more important development of the 1890s was the growth of national trade-union centres. For two decades the TUC had been the only permanent national trade-union confederation, but now numerous associations started to emerge in other countries. In Spain there was the *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT) from 1888, in Germany the General Commission of the German Trade Unions from 1890, in Belgium the *Commission syndicale* (1890), in the Netherlands the *Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat* (NAS) from 1893, in the France the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) from 1895, in Austria the Trade-Union Commission of 1892–3, and a similar body in Hungary at the end of the 1890s. In Italy, in contrast, there was a delay: only in the year 1906 was the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro* (CGL) founded there.

So there were now three different models of trade union confronting each other: the German model, the British model and the French model. The German model involved the provision of substantial material support with correspondingly high dues and a reformist orientation, which included efforts to bring about social legislation. As a broad generalisation it can be said that it was close to the British 'trade-unionist' model, from which it differed less in its practical activity than in its fundamental programme, which was committed to socialism as the final goal, and its political attachment to the SPD. The British trade unions, in contrast, were only able with great difficulty to detach themselves from their co-operation with the Liberals in the years after 1900, and establish their own political party. The 'Latin' model, finally, which was dominant in France above all, was based on revolutionary Syndicalism, with trade unions which were organisationally weak and could hardly provide any sort of material support for their members, but saw the chief instrument of trade-union work as the strike, intended to develop into a general strike even for 'political' objectives, while any kind of activity involving the state (such as attempting to influence legislation) was fundamentally rejected, owing to the influence of Anarchist ideas.¹²

12 A contemporary attempt to construct an international typology of trade unionism was made by Paul Louis (1913). For the present state of research, see Robert, Boll and Prost 1997. It is, of course, incorrect to *equate* Anarchism and Syndicalism. There were significant currents in the Anarchist movement, and not just individualist currents, which rejected trade-union work in principle, on the grounds that trade unions were not revolutionary organisations but narrowly corporatist ones. (For a presentation of the relation between the Anarchists and the trade unions in France, see Maitron 1975, pp. 265–330; for the

The formation of national confederations of trade unions also soon raised the question of international co-operation. After all, not every national trade-union headquarters was represented at the congresses of the Second International. The TUC declared itself in favour of the holding of pure workers' congresses (i.e. congresses of trade unions by themselves, without socialist parties), but it did not undertake any concrete steps in this direction.¹³ The CGT, on the other hand, did actually call a congress of this kind in Paris in September 1900, using it above all to propagate the idea of the general strike. But international participation in the congress was minimal.¹⁴

The initiative therefore passed to the Scandinavians. There had already been workers' congresses in Scandinavia since 1886 – many years before the foundation of national trade-union organisations, which took place in Denmark and Sweden in 1898 and in Norway in 1899. These congresses, if we leave aside the International Trade Secretariats, which were then just being formed, were the first solid examples of organised international trade-union co-operation in Europe. The Scandinavians also found a British partner in the shape of the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU), established in 1899 by the TUC as a reaction to the attempts being made at that time to restrict the right to strike by making trade unions legally responsible for the consequences of a strike. The GFTU was a kind of mutual insurance society for the individual trade unions, and it still exists today. But it never included more than roughly a quarter of the TUC's membership, since many important trade unions stayed out of it. It initially conceived of its role in an activist way, and in view of the lack of interest shown by the TUC it willingly made itself the international representative of the British trade-union movement (to the extent that this task was not performed by the International Trade Secretariats).¹⁵ Contacts with the Danes

discussions of this theme at the international level, above all at the international Anarchist congress of 1907, see the documents printed in Oberländer 1972, pp. 303–98). It should be added that the associations of Anarchists, based on the voluntary principle and on common politico-theoretical convictions (or on shared attitudes to the most general questions of human existence), rested on very different foundations from those of the trade unions, oriented as they were towards an 'objective' economic criterion. After the First World War, this organisational dualism continued to play a role, particularly in Anarchosyndicalism.

13 Milner 1990, pp. 77–9.

14 Milner 1990, pp. 64–7.

15 On the GFTU, see Prochaska 1982. There is an overview of the internationalism of the individual trade unions, which was essentially oriented towards their own specific branch, in Newton 1985, pp. 69–98.

led the GFTU to propose an international meeting in the context of the Scandinavian Workers' Congress which was scheduled to take place in August 1901 in Copenhagen.¹⁶

Accordingly, on 21 August 1901 one representative each from Belgium, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland met in Copenhagen. Since all the national trade-union bodies except the British one were under Social Democratic influence, the German representative, Carl Legien, was able immediately to push through his conception of international co-operation. He rejected the idea of international congresses of trade unions, proposed by the CGT (not present at the discussion) and the TUC. For one thing, the organisations were too weak to accomplish this. Moreover, such conferences could only discuss general themes, for which the congresses of the Second International already provided a forum, and the German trade unions always took part in those congresses in any case. One should admittedly exchange views about international trade-union matters, he said, and even organise international strike assistance, if necessary. But for this it would be sufficient if the general secretaries of the trade unions of each country met together. Meetings of this kind could take place annually in connection with a national trade-union congress. No one spoke against his proposal, and it was agreed to meet again the following year in Stuttgart in conjunction with the congress of the General Commission of the German trade unions. The general secretaries of the national organisations not present would be invited to attend.¹⁷ The German conception of the content and structure of international trade-union work was thereby confirmed for the first time.¹⁸

An organisational structure was established by the next conference, which was held as agreed in Stuttgart in 1902, and which also displayed a more representative character than the previous conference, with the arrival of delegates from the CGT, the NAS and the trade unions of Bohemia, Austria, Italy and Spain. The French delegate Victor Griffuelhes, taking the syndicalist standpoint, once again attempted to raise the question of whether this was a conference or a congress (a conference would imply acceptance of the role of the Second International, a congress would imply its rejection), but he found support only from the NAS, which was drifting ever more strongly towards syndicalism. The German national headquarters was fixed as the responsible centre

16 Prochaska 1982, p. 91; Sassenbach 1926, p. 7.

17 The proceedings of the first international conference of secretaries of national trade-union organisations, held in Copenhagen on 21 August 1901, were printed in *Protokoll der Verhandlungen* 1902, p. 280.

18 Milner 1990, pp. 81–4.

of the international movement, and it was given the task of gathering international trade-union statistics and distributing information and appeals for solidarity.¹⁹

Here we can only sketch the further development of the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, which was its initial title, up to the caesura of the First World War. After meeting in Dublin in 1903 they went over to a system of biennial conferences. They met in Amsterdam in 1905, in Christiania (Oslo) in 1907, in Paris in 1909, in Budapest in 1911, and finally in Zürich in 1913.²⁰ In 1904 Legien issued what was described as 'the first international report on the trade-union movement'. It dealt with the previous year. Nine more reports were to follow in the years up to the outbreak of the war.

Apart from the discussion of a series of individual trade-union demands and questions of organisation, the meetings were entirely dominated by the dispute on fundamental principles between the vast majority of the delegates, with Legien acting as their spokesman, and the determined syndicalist minority which hailed from France (and from the Netherlands until the departure of the NAS in 1907).²¹

Their differences of opinion concerned the fundamental objectives of the organisation. Should they be limited to the achievement of day-to-day trade-union demands? Was it not necessary to have a general political direction, so as to be able to conduct the class struggle? Was not the general strike the most effective instrument for attaining the goal of socialism? The CGT raised these points, but was never able to win majority support. By 1905 Legien had already gained acceptance for his position that the conferences should only discuss 'matters that directly affect the trade unions', to the exclusion of 'all questions which are theoretical or concern the tendencies and tactics of

19 *Protokoll der Zweiten Internationalen Konferenz* 1902.

20 See the minutes of these meetings: *Bericht über die dritte Internationale Konferenz* 1903; 'Bericht über die Vierte internationale Konferenz, 1905', in *Zweiter internationaler Bericht* 1906, pp. 19–33; 'Bericht über die Fünfte internationale Konferenz, 1907', in *Vierter internationaler Bericht* 1908, pp. 13–28; 'Sechste internationale Konferenz 1909', in *Sechster internationaler Bericht* 1910, pp. 18–41; 'Siebente internationale Konferenz 1911', in *Achter internationaler Bericht* 1911, pp. 20–40; 'Protokoll der 8. Internationalen Konferenz', in *Bericht des Internationalen Sekretärs für 1912/13*, n.d., pp. 18–54.

21 The departure of the NAS from the International Secretariat happened almost at the same time as the re-establishment in the Netherlands of a trade-union federation which was Social Democratic in tendency. This, the *Nederlandsch Verbond van Vakverenigen* (NVV), was immediately accepted as a member and its secretary, Jan Oudegeest, would subsequently play an important role in the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU).

the trade union movements of the various countries'.²² In view of this, the majority repeatedly rejected calls to give the congresses a wider agenda and thereby transform the International Secretariat into a genuine 'international of labour' (as a counterpart to the 'international of the politicians'). Legien feared that such a move would lead to the creation of a rival centre to the Second International.

The French trade unionists reacted to being placed in a minority in the first few conferences by boycotting the 1905 and 1907 meetings. In 1909, however, they returned, under their new General Secretary Léon Jouhaux.²³ After the NAS had withdrawn from the movement they hoped to find a new alliance partner in the shape of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW),²⁴ the movement founded in 1905 in the USA as a revolutionary competitor to the moderate 'trade-unionist' American Federation of Labor (AFL), which had existed since 1886. The CGT's hopes were frustrated, however, because the IWW was not allowed to join the International Secretariat. Legien had long been in contact with the chair of the AFL, Samuel Gompers, and the latter organisation was admitted instead of the IWW. This resulted in a big increase in the organisation's members and financial contributions.²⁵

22 'Bericht über die Vierte internationale Konferenz 1905', *Zweiter internationaler Bericht*, 1906, p. 30.

23 On changes in the CGT's attitude towards work in the International Secretariat and the expectations connected with this, see Milner 1990, pp. 143–60 and Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, pp. 102–17. Jolyon Howarth (1985, pp. 71–97) provides a general overview of the confrontation between the CGT and the General Commission of the Free Trade Unions in the period before the First World War, which is not simply limited to the discussions in and around the conferences of the time, but also examines the occasional attempts to conduct something of a critical dialogue, albeit ultimately without success, through visits by delegations and speeches at public meetings. There are also important details in Vandervoort (1996).

24 On this North American version of Syndicalism, see Dubofsky 1969 and Renshaw 1967.

25 The development of the AFL's international orientation in the years before the First World War is covered in Lorwin 1930, pp. 45–9 and Taft 1957, pp. 418–26. Legien and Gompers had already become personally acquainted in 1895 and they learned to respect each other, despite all their political differences, when Gompers came to Europe for a long visit during a one-year absence from the AFL leadership. They met again at the 1909 international conference and again during a journey made by Legien through the USA in 1913, which was organised with Gompers's assistance. See Gompers 1949, vol. 1, p. 367 and vol. 2, pp. 34–9. This work also contains many other details about Gompers's relationship to the European labour movement. Here is his evaluation of Legien: 'He was a German from the tip of his toes to the last hair of his head and he assumed a general attitude of German superiority'

The conferences of the International Secretariat were also burdened by several long-lasting organisational conflicts, brought about by splits in the trade-union movements of a number of countries. The reason for the split in Bohemia was the national conflict between Czechs and Germans, which troubled not only the International Secretariat but also the Second International.²⁶ In Bulgaria, the Social Democratic Party had split into two factions, right and left. This led to a parallel split in the national trade-union movement.²⁷

Despite all this, the International Secretariat enjoyed a great deal of growth at this time. Almost all of the existing trade-union centres in Europe joined it. A bridge was thrown across the Atlantic with the adherence of the AFL, and this was particularly important for the European trade unionists. After all, it enabled them to secure a smooth transfer of their members who had emigrated to the USA into the local trade unions (which also signified the possibility of gaining employment in a considerable number of trades).

Russia formed the great exception. It is true that just after the start of the 1905 revolution there Legien had expressed the hope that they would be able to welcome this country too into their ranks.²⁸ In fact the Russian trade-union movement took on a previously unimagined impetus. At a conference in February 1906, a start was made with the formation of a central organisation. It was decided to call a congress which would establish this organisation on a firm footing.²⁹ One of the most important organisers of the trade-union movement in St. Petersburg, Viktor Petrovich Grinevich, spent some time in Berlin early in 1907. He published a report on the situation of the Russian trade unions and reached an agreement that a Russian trade-union delegation would be admitted to the impending Stuttgart congress of the Second International.

These trade-union delegates, alongside the delegates from Russian parties, participated intensively in the congress discussions on the relation between

(Gompers 1949, vol. 2, p. 39). Legien himself made a detailed report on his trip to the USA (Legien 1914).

26 On the background of this dispute and its further development, see McDermott 1988, pp. 4–14 and Milner 1990, pp. 106–8.

27 Legien had to face this problem on several of his journeys through the Balkans. See Milner 1990, pp. 108–12.

28 See the statement printed in Sassenbach, p. 15, which is clearly taken from a circular.

29 The analysis in the next few paragraphs is a summary of my article 'Die russischen Gewerkschaften in der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung 1906 und 1917', in Becker and Lademacher (eds.) 2000, pp. 147–55. This article also contains detailed references to the sources on the international contacts of the Russian trade unions, as well as to the general literature on the Russian trade-union movement in the years before the First World War, which will not be reproduced here for reasons of space.

parties and trade unions, a subject which was of special significance for them in view of the fragmented character of the socialist movement in the Russian Empire. They particularly stressed the need to maintain the unity of the trade unions. But closer international links could not be forged at this stage. Almost simultaneously, a new wave of harsh repression passed over Russia. It turned out to be impossible to hold the planned trade-union congress. Many well-known trade-union activists were arrested or forced into exile, while their organisations were prohibited. In February 1914, indeed, the General Commission of the German Trade Unions actually began to keep records of the Russian trade-union movement. But as long as no central trade-union headquarters existed in Russia, there could also be no system of formal membership.

Events took a somewhat different course in the case of the International Trade Secretariats (ITSS). The St. Petersburg Union of Metalworkers, founded in 1907, was able to join the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) a year later. Even this connection was broken off in 1912, however, when the St. Petersburg Union of Metalworkers was prohibited. This temporary period of membership was to play a role in the disputes between the Bolshevik leadership of the Russian Union of Metalworkers and the IMF after the First World War, when the RILU was set up.

Russians also joined the International Union of Woodworkers and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) on the eve of the war. The latter indeed organised a considerable amount of support (above all financial support) for the Russian Seamen's Union, once the German secretary of the ITF became convinced that the conspiratorial behaviour of the Russians – such as the use of false names – was done for their own protection and not to deceive and mislead the international workers' movement.³⁰ There were possibly also informal contacts with other International Secretariats. If we disregard this special Russian situation, Legien could unquestionably look back on a period of tremendous expansion when he summoned the International Secretariat to Zürich in September 1913 for its eighth conference, which was to be the last one before the world war broke out. On numerous small points, which concerned questions of organisation, the exchange of information, the working out of spe-

30 The correspondence preserved in the ITF archive at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Bonn (Files 3 to 5), gives a picture of the contacts they had with the Russian Seamen's Union, which had its headquarters abroad (in Constantinople, then after the start of the Balkan Wars in Alexandria, where the authorities engaged in repressive measures against it, evidently in response to pressure from the Russian government, and finally in Antwerp). In order to gain the confidence of the ITF, Trotsky, for instance, had to call on the good services of the leaders of Austrian Social Democracy.

cific trade-union demands and so on, the discussions at this conference did not differ from those at previous conferences. The French proposal to call an international workers' congress was once again passed to the national trade-union centres for further examination. But in one important respect this conference did differ from previous ones. The Americans were able to push through their proposal for a change of name. The International Secretariat was now renamed the *International Federation of Trade Unions* (IFTU), and Legien was elected as International President. No further organisational consequences were drawn at this stage. It was left to the individual members of the federation to decide what these would be.

The change of name was certainly an expression of the strong growth of the organisation in previous years. This had consequences for the Secretariat itself. Legien, as International Secretary (this was still an honorary post), had already appointed an assistant secretary in 1909, whose job was to conduct the written correspondence, to organise the translations this involved, and, last but not least, to write the annual reports laid before the members by Legien.³¹ The rapid growth in the secretary's workload led to the establishment of an actual translation bureau, which also serviced the International Trade Secretariats. More office staff had to be taken on.³²

This increase in the size of the apparatus also made it possible to put into effect a decision made at Paris in 1909: to launch a regular newsletter for the international trade-union movement. This was the *Internationale Gewerkschafts-Korrespondenz* [International Trade Union Newsletter], which appeared in three languages, English, French and German from January 1913 onwards. It was possible to bring out at least the German edition every fortnight. 1,400 copies of each edition went directly to the trade-union papers of the member organisations, and some of the national trade-union centres provided additional translations.³³

The most impressive phenomenon, however, was the growth of the membership. Legien's first report gave a figure of 1.9 million members.³⁴ In 1912 he

31 'Sechste internationale Konferenz 1909', p. 29; 'Siebente internationale Konferenz 1911', p. 25.

32 See the references in the 1909 and 1912/13 reports (*Siebenter internationaler Bericht* 1911, p. 23; *Bericht des internationalen Sekretärs*, n.d., pp. 13, 16).

33 *Bericht des internationalen Sekretärs*, n.d., pp. 11–12. See also Milner 1990, pp. 90–1. Here, however, the data given on the issues of the German edition which actually appeared are incorrect. When the war broke out, the Newsletter had to cease publication, although it did resurface in 1915.

34 *Erster internationaler Bericht* 1904, pp. 3–10.

counted a total of roughly 13 million trade-union members in the 19 countries attached to the International Secretariat, and 7.5 million of these belonged directly to organisations which were members of the Secretariat.³⁵ The 5.5 million who were not members were predominantly attached to organisations hostile to the Secretariat. But there was one important exception: the British TUC, which was only indirectly represented in the Secretariat through the quarter of its members who belonged to the GFTU. A direct representative of the TUC, the secretary of its Parliamentary Committee, was present for the first time at the 1912 conference, as a guest. This indicated that the TUC's views about the importance of international work were slowly changing.³⁶

It was still more significant that for the first time representatives of the International Trade Secretariats were admitted as guests, and allowed to take part in discussions of questions of common concern in a session after the main meeting. It had already been decided in Christiania (Oslo) to invite the trade unions of each country to join not only the relevant national trade-union centre but also the relevant International Trade Secretariat. Other similar decisions, aimed at strengthening the ITSS, were made at subsequent congresses.

Twenty-five of the twenty-six existing ITSS³⁷ responded to Legien's invitation to a conference in 1913. The discussion at that conference³⁸ was mainly concerned with organisational matters. It dealt with the submission of annual reports, with the production of a unified set of trade-union statistics – this was of particular interest to Legien³⁹ – and with the call for the individual trade uni-

35 *Zehnter Internationaler Bericht* 1913, pp. 8 and 14.

36 The TUC representative was sent in 1912 on the initiative of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, which, as a founding member of the International Miners' Federation, had long been a supporter of active internationalism. The Miners' Federation took a critical stance towards the GFTU. The TUC and the German General Commission exchanged representatives at their respective congresses of 1913 and 1914, a practice which in the case of the British ended in a somewhat scandalous fashion: the rule at the German congress was that only one representative per country could give a speech of greeting, and this privilege was given to the GFTU delegate, because he represented a body which was member of the IFTU. The TUC found this insulting (cf. Prochaska 1982, p. 142). During the First World War, the TUC started to engage actively in international trade-union politics, but it was not able to push the GFTU out of this area until the postwar period.

37 Milner 1990, p. 168, on the basis of a circular from Legien.

38 'Protokoll der 1. Konferenz' n.d., pp. 57–62.

39 As the *British* secretary of the International Clothing Workers' Federation remarked: 'Statistics are a German speciality, after all; but that can be exaggerated, and it seems to me that some organisations already publish more material than their own officials can read or digest' ('Protokoll der 1. Konferenz', n.d., p. 60).

ons to join their respective national trade-union centres. In that connection a problem arose which would lead to repeated discussions in the postwar period, in entirely different circumstances. For there was a proposal on the table to insist that the membership of the International Secretariat should be limited to trade unions affiliated to their own national trade-union centre, hence also to the IFTU. This was a significant point for the Italian representatives because not long before there had been a syndicalist split from the local trade-union centre, and there were ongoing discussions about the creation of a rival syndicalist International.⁴⁰ But the representatives of the International Miners' Federation pointed out that they had German members not just from the Free Trade Unions but also from several other organisations (the Poles, the liberal Hirsch-Duncker unions, and until recently the Catholic unions as well). All in all the majority of those present at the meeting did not ascribe any great significance to the influence of rival organisations, in view of the real situation. Affiliation to a national trade-union centre was as yet just a recommendation. In any case everyone was agreed that these discussions should be held regularly in future.

The final decision, against which there were some opposing votes, was to hold the next conference, the second conference to be held under the name International Federation of Trade Unions, in San Francisco in connection with the celebrations around the planned opening of the Panama Canal. This decision showed immense self-confidence, and it also reflected the close alliance of Legien and the General Commission with the American trade unions. The proposal had come from the Americans, and it was accepted despite the great problems involved – a financial contribution had to be raised to allow the smaller organisations to attend – thanks to the support of the Germans. This alliance, which also included the GFTU, may be surprising at first sight given the close association between the German trade unions and the SPD. But the basis for it lay in a shared attitude of reformism and a distaste for radicalism, which was indeed demonstrated immediately after the outbreak of the war. The German trade unionists were, it is true, members of the SPD, but, unlike most of the Social Democratic trade-union movements in Europe, they had very quickly emancipated themselves from any kind of party influence, owing to the strength of their organisation. By dominating the International Secretariat from the outset, Legien had succeeded in imbuing it with his own basic

40 The ITSs were also affected by discussions over the Syndicalist programme, brought up in particular by the French trade unions. Christian Gras (1968, pp. 595–612) provides an example of this in his study of the International Metalworkers' Federation, an ITS founded in 1893.

orientation. Owing to this, the Scandinavians – one could also add the Belgians and the Austrians – were prevented from ‘exercising a social-democratic leadership which would have been capable of uniting the various strands of the labour movement and therefore of creating a more solid international organisation’.⁴¹ This meant that important questions of principle were excluded from discussion – because they were political – and issues of real content were forced into the background by the organisational polarisation between the General Commission and the CGT.⁴²

41 Milner 1988, p. 23. In taking this view, Milner is following a Danish historian.

42 The discussions that took place within international Social Democracy about the connection between the party and the trade unions – and thus potentially about relations between the Second International and the International Secretariat – thus played no role in the conferences of the International Secretariat. Since some of the organisations which belonged to the International Secretariat rejected Social Democracy, to transfer these issues to the Secretariat would have led that body to break up. As far as the Second International was concerned, this reflection did not prevent individual parties from carrying on such a discussion. Disputes on the question became virulent when the subject of the mass strike was raised in Western Europe, and particularly in the SPD, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution of 1905. The General Commission saw in this a threat to its position and at a party congress in 1906 it compelled the SPD leadership to concede to it something in the nature of a monopoly of decision-making in all trade-union questions. (On this see Schorske 1955, pp. 49–53). This was a defeat for the orthodox wing of the SPD, which upheld the primacy of the political party and its right to give instructions to the trade unions. The 1907 congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party, on the other hand, saw the victory of this orthodox position. (The relevant resolution is printed in Elwood 1974, p. 115). The Second International took up these discussions at its August 1907 congress, held in Stuttgart. The resolution it adopted did speak of the independent positions of the party and the trade unions in their respective fields of activity. But this was also said to involve ever-closer co-operation and the need for mutual support. The trade unions, it was added, could only fulfil their task if they were ultimately imbued with socialist consciousness. (The discussion on the trade union question at the Stuttgart Congress is summarised in Hermes 1979, pp. 130–8 and Milner 1990, pp. 55–9. The French and German minutes of both the plenary and committee sessions on this subject have been reprinted [incompletely, owing to translation problems] in *Histoire de la Deuxième Internationale*, 17, 1985, pp. 220–7, 275–9, 514–45 and 670–82). The Stuttgart Congress thus proclaimed that the party did after all exercise a kind of ideological leadership. This view immediately received Lenin's agreement. (See, for example, the two articles with the identical title ‘The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart’, in Lenin 1978, 13, pp. 75–81 and 82–93). But the Stuttgart resolution did not contain anything to show how the party's leadership could be put into practice organisationally, for example how the trade unions could be directed by parliamentary parties.

The national trade-union centres had made considerable progress in associating together more closely during the period of slightly over a decade. But there was still a long way to go before one could speak of an internationally effective force. What the new title of 'International Federation of Trade Unions' would really signify was yet to be decided. One should note Milner's pointed conclusion: 'Overall, the international conferences tended to concentrate on organisational questions (the scope of the international conferences and the establishment of the international secretariat), and practical measures concerning labour were relatively neglected'.⁴³ Needless to say, the postwar judgment made by the communists was even more negative: 'This was not a fighting organisation, but an international centre for the provision of information. One could roughly describe it this way: it was an international information bureau for the exchange of statistical material, an international postbox or something of that nature. What was missing above all was the characteristic feature of a workers' international: the predominance of the *interests of the class as a whole* over the interests of the individual components of the international'.⁴⁴

But it would be wrong and unjust to pass over the fact that the International Secretariat did not simply collect and exchange information; it provided many important impulses for the international solidarity of trade unions with each other, which is the essential kernel of trade-union internationalism. The Secretariat organised extensive campaigns to collect money for many big strikes. After the end of the Balkan Wars, it regarded it as its special task to assist in the reconstruction of the trade unions, very much weakened during those wars, and Legien made many trips to the Balkans for this purpose. But it was a clear indication of the structural problems of the Secretariat that it had to rely above all on the German and Scandinavian trade unions for material assistance, and its appeals met with very little response from either the French trade unions, with their traditionally weak organisation, or the British trade unions, which were strong but had little interest in internationalism.⁴⁵

It remains to be pointed out that many of the controversies which emerged again after the war in the confrontation between the IFTU and the RILU had already developed in the ranks of the International Secretariat before 1914, even if the initial conditions of the postwar organisational split created a completely different context and took on much greater dimensions, and the differences of approach developed with a very different dynamic. What one can say is that

43 Milner 1990, p. 100.

44 Losowski 1924, p. 19.

45 See, on this point, the collection of data from the annual reports and the circulars of the Secretariat printed in Milner 1990, pp. 101–4.

not a few of the criticisms made of Legien by the syndicalists anticipated later communist positions to a certain degree.

Moreover, the syndicalists had already attempted before 1914 to set up a revolutionary alternative to the International Secretariat. Movements of this kind took place around the turn of the century both in a number of European countries and in the Americas. The starting conditions for this were not always similar. Only on very rare occasions were the syndicalists able to gain a dominant position in the trade-union movement. They almost always found that they were confronted with much more influential Social Democratic trade unions, with which they entered into fierce conflict. There were only a few countries where they worked in a broader trade union framework; France was a special case, possessing a unified national trade-union centre dominated by syndicalists. Nor were the origins of Syndicalism the same in every case. There were countries in which Syndicalism grew up as a revolutionary tendency within Social Democratic trade unions, quite unconnected with anarchist activities, and then, after a split had occurred, it became open to anarchist influence.⁴⁶

This comment applies to the NAS, for example. In Germany, in contrast, there grew up after 1890, side by side with the General Commission, a second, more strongly political, Social Democratic trade-union federation of local groups, the *Freie Vereinigung deutscher Gewerkschaften* [Free Association of German Trade Unions]. After 1906, when the General Commission forced the SPD to expel these groups, they increasingly drifted in the direction of Syndicalism. In Italy, a *Unione sindacale italiana* (USI) split off from the CGL in 1912. In Sweden, similarly, the *Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation* (SAC) emerged from the Social Democratic youth organisation. In Spain, the *Confederación nacional del trabajo* (CNT) first arose as a regional association of trade unions in Barcelona and then in the whole of Catalonia in which Anarchists and Left Socialists co-operated. The initial intention of the CNT was to unite with the central socialist trade union, the UGT, but it came ever more strongly under anarchist influence, partly because of the government's repressive measures.

In the English-speaking countries, developments pursued a more complicated path. The IWW originated in 1905 in the USA with socialist participation, in opposition to the AFL. It regarded itself as an organisational alternative to the latter. There was also a split from the IWW in 1912 by a Syndicalist League, which orientated itself towards the CGT. But it remained insignificant. There were similar syndicalist tendencies operating within the British TUC.

46 This brief summary is based on the presentations of the subject in Thorpe (1989) and van der Linden and Thorpe (1990).

In Latin America, Syndicalism was imbued with anarchist feeling from the start, owing to the strong participation of immigrants from Spain and Italy. The *Casa del Obrero Mundial* was set up in Mexico City in 1912 at the height of the Mexican Revolution. It did not survive for very long, but it became a gathering point for trade-union activities, and a great variety of currents developed out of it. The anarchist influence was particularly strong in Argentina. The Argentinian Anarchists founded the *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina* (FORA) in 1901 as an 'anarcho-communist' trade-union organisation with a federal structure. The Socialists replied two years later by founding their own central trade union, named UGT on the Spanish model. But syndicalist ideas gained the upper hand in it after a series of fierce strike struggles conducted in part in cooperation with the FORA. In the subsequent period there were complex unity negotiations between Syndicalists and Anarchists, but despite repeated attempts they were not crowned with success. In fact from 1915 two separate trade-union federations fought each other while using the same name, FORA. One was Syndicalist (it added the words Ninth Congress to its title), the other Anarchist (it described itself as FORA Fifth Congress, or FORA V. Congress). In other Latin American countries as well (Uruguay, Brazil, Chile and Cuba), Anarchist or Syndicalist ideas found fertile ground, although the organisations were nowhere as influential as they were in Argentina.

There is no doubt that all these movements had many similarities. The stress on direct action and the rejection of state 'legality', the abandonment of fixed wage-contracts and similar binding agreements with the factory-owners, and rejection of parliamentary politics and hence of co-operation with all political parties: all these things formed the common denominator which covered the whole tendency, pushing into the background the organisational peculiarities and separate traditions which stemmed from the movements' closeness to or distance from Anarchism. This common ground raised the question of international co-operation. The international anarchist congress held in Amsterdam in 1907 provided an opportunity for anarchists active in the trade-union movement to meet informally. One result of this was the publication of a periodical, the *Bulletin International du Mouvement Syndicaliste*.⁴⁷

But the biggest question turned out to be the international orientation of the CGT, which in 1906 had adopted a programmatic manifesto of revolutionary Syndicalism (the Amiens Charter). This provided theoretical guidelines for the whole of the international syndicalist movement.⁴⁸ Although the CGT was

47 Thorpe 1989, pp. 31–2.

48 According to the Amiens Charter, the 'increase of workers' well-being' was only one side of

in a hopeless minority within the International Secretariat, it did not withdraw from it. For one thing, it hoped that in the long run the syndicalist strategy would be adopted. In addition, the International Secretariat (IS) brought together the more influential workers' organisations of Europe. But an equally decisive factor in the return of the CGT to active participation in the IS in 1909 (it had never formally withdrawn from the organisation) was the fact that because it was the only national trade-union centre in France, reformist and socialist minorities were active within it, even though the CGT itself stood on a platform of revolutionary syndicalism. Hence co-operation with the International Secretariat also meant a kind of reinsurance against an eventual split by these minorities, which would otherwise have been supported by Berlin. All this was very clear, and called forth sharp criticism of the CGT's attitude from a number of other syndicalist organisations in Europe. Moreover, the dominant syndicalist forces in the CGT had possessed a journal since 1909, *La Vie Ouvrière*, which was particularly inclined towards this international mode of operation.⁴⁹

In places where the syndicalists were clearly in a minority position in comparison with existing organisations, there was growing pressure to constitute themselves as an international movement. Finally, in September 1913, they held an international congress in London. The course of the congress was marked by numerous disputes, in which political differences and personal ambitions were mixed up together. The political differences originated from the varied background of the respective national movements, but they also reflected claims to leadership on the part of particular organisations. There was also disagreement as to how sharply the line of demarcation from 'politics' should be drawn. Behind this there lay differences in the degree to which anarchist ideas had penetrated each movement. At last, however, after fierce debates, it proved possible to agree on a declaration of principles which firmly fixed the line of economic class struggle on the basis of industrial trade unions. The London Congress, however, was unable to unite in rejecting the International Secretariat and its successor the IFTU and stressing the need to establish a revolutionary trade-union international. There were also very different views of future

the class struggle. The other aspect was preparation for the overthrow of capitalism by the general strike and the taking over of the economy by the trade unions (in which connection participation in elections was regarded as pointless). The action of the revolutionary trade unions was to be carried out in complete autonomy from 'parties and sects'. Trade union members were free to participate in political activities, but they were not to 'introduce into the unions the opinions they hold outside them' (The Amiens Charter is printed in translation in Thorpe 1989, pp. 319–20).

49 Thorpe 1989, pp. 54–8.

possibilities and the ways of moving forward from what had been achieved in London. The congress finally agreed on the creation of an Information Bureau, which would be located at the headquarters of the NAS, and this body would also take over the job of publishing the International Bulletin which had been established two years earlier.⁵⁰

Whereas *La Vie Ouvrière* thought the course of the London Congress had confirmed its estimate of its pointlessness, most of the other syndicalists thought a significant step forward had been made, which in the final analysis must lead to the creation of an independent revolutionary trade-union international.⁵¹ The Information Bureau became active in this sense after the congress, and at the beginning of 1914 it began publication of the Bulletin.

When the vast majority of the Social Democratic parties decided to support the rulers of their own countries in going to war in 1914, and to cease their opposition to the government – under the various headings of '*Burgfrieden*', '*Union sacrée*', and so on – thereby abandoning internationalism, they were followed in practice by all the member organisations of the IFTU, the policy of which was determined by the German trade unions and by the IFTU's president, Legien.⁵² The international organisations of the workers' movement had broken down completely. But they continued to exist as the shells of an organisation, for control over them was of importance to the war effort. The respective leading groups needed to make use of these organisations to defend their attitude to the war and to propagate their claim to exercise hegemony over the international movement.

Even so, Legien found that he was in a difficult situation as he was both the head of the German trade unions and the president of the IFTU. If he identified himself too much with the German military, his claim to an international position became untenable. This forced him into tactical manoeuvring.⁵³ He therefore endeavoured to appear neutral in his capacity as president of the IFTU. On 25 August 1914, he sent a circular to the trade-union centres of the neutral countries defending Germany's attitude to the conflict, but adding that it was no different from that of the Entente. He made it clear that he was not

50 On the course of the London Congress, see Thorpe 1989, pp. 69–80. The declaration of principles as finally agreed is printed on p. 320 of the same work.

51 See Thorpe 1989, pp. 80–6, on the discussion following the congress.

52 There is a great amount of literature on this topic, but we shall only mention the two most recent analyses, which we have used as a basis for our general remarks on the trade-union movement during the course of the war: Horne (1991) and Bieber (1981, 2 volumes).

53 Thus he originally wanted to abstain in the famous *Reichstag* session of 4 August 1914, which voted the war credits (Bieber 1981, 1, p. 79).

proposing to give up his position in the IFTU. On the contrary, he maintained his claim to lead it. He also wrote to the trade-union centres of the Entente countries, sometimes directly, sometimes through intermediaries. Germany had tried everything to maintain peace, he said, but ultimately found itself in a hopeless position in view of the Russian attack. But that did not alter his feelings for the workers in the states which were opposing Germany. He hoped that contacts could be kept up, despite everything, and that the International could again arise after the end of the war, which would happen soon. But in any case, it would of course be impossible to hold the San Francisco conference that had been planned.⁵⁴

In November 1914, Legien set up an Under-Secretariat in Amsterdam, headed by Oudegeest, so as to make sure that contacts were maintained with the Entente countries.⁵⁵ This happened at the right time, before the French and British trade unions were able to bring up the question of transferring the IFTU headquarters to a neutral country. That call was raised for the first time at a conference in London in February 1915, and it finally led to the setting up of a separate information office, in view of the German refusal to do this.

The new office was established at an international negotiation which coincided with the Leeds conference of the GFTU in July 1916, and in which Belgian and Italian representatives participated alongside members of the CGT. Its essential significance lay not so much in the organisational decision to set up a liaison office as in the adoption of a programme of economic and socio-political demands to be implemented after the end of the war (these demands concerned the right to strike, the protection of labour, social insurance and migration). This was a challenge to Legien. Demands were being raised here which did not differ in any essential respect from the programme of the German General Commission, but which had not so far been brought into the discussion on war aims by the IFTU.

54 These letters are documented in Sassenbach 1926, pp. 40–9, and *Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund* 1919, p. 17. See also Milner 1990, pp. 211–16. Bieber (1981, 1, pp. 266–8 and 2, p. 908) discusses the extent to which Legien used the modest apparatus of the IFTU for the purposes of German war propaganda, despite his attempt to give an impression of neutrality on the international level. According to him, Legien was clearly involved in doing this. He had the good luck after the end of the war that there was not even the beginning of a discussion on this subject.

55 On this development, see Sassenbach 1926, pp. 49–52 and 56; *Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund* 1919, pp. 18–27; and Milner 1990, pp. 213–16. Oudegeest later presented an extensive report on his wartime activities as part of the preparations for the postwar resuscitation of the IFTU (*Bericht der Zweigstelle* n.d.).

Legien reacted to this by attempting to summon an immediate conference in Berne, in neutral Switzerland. The date for this was postponed on the insistence of the Scandinavians. Initially there was only a meeting at Stockholm in summer 1917, where the international socialist peace conference, which had been called partly in response to the Russian Revolution, was about to take place. Attendance at the Stockholm meeting was limited to the central bodies of the trade unions of Scandinavia and the other neutral countries, alongside the trade unionists from the Central Powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The 1916 Leeds programme was not discussed in detail, but it was accepted as the basis of further discussions. The Swiss were asked to try once again to call a genuinely representative conference. A conference met in October 1917 in Berne, but it was hampered, as the Stockholm meeting had been, by the absence of representatives from the Entente countries. This enabled Legien once again to ward off the call for moving the headquarters of the IFTU. The Leeds demands, however, were thoroughly discussed at the conference, and a programme of a similar scope was adopted. With this the international trade-union movement now had an official set of demands which would allow it to exert influence on the peace negotiations.

These purely union-based negotiations were to be followed in February and September 1918 by conferences of the socialist parties and the trade-union organisations of the Allied powers – this now included the Americans – held in London. The AFL was unable to attend the February meeting, but it did arrive in September. On the British side the TUC took a leading role (as did the Labour Party). It was clearly endeavouring to relegate the GFTU to the sidelines.⁵⁶

This development had a vital result for the way the trade-union international saw itself. Until then Legien, and, following him, the great majority of trade unionists, had always supported the view that ‘general’ questions (that is, questions which needed to be decided politically) should be treated at the congresses of the Second International, not the trade unions. It is true that

⁵⁶ The various wartime conferences are examined in Sassenbach 1926, pp. 56–64; Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, pp. 208–59; Milner 1990, pp. 218–23; Prochaska 1982, pp. 142–50; and Horne 1991, pp. 317–33 (with particular stress on the programme of demands for the postwar period, namely the ‘workers’ demands’ adopted by the Leeds conference in 1916). The various letters of invitation to these conferences are printed in *Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund* 1919, pp. 27–62. The following sets of conference minutes are available: *General Federation of Trade Unions* 1916, pp. 3–20; *Konferenz von Vertretern* 1917; ‘Protokoll der Verhandlungen’ 1917, pp. 12–20 (this is Legien’s report on his activities which was presented to the Berne conference); *Protokoll der Internationalen Gewerkschafts-Konferenz* 1917.

even now the majority were still far from regarding 'workers' protection' as part of an all-embracing programme for the reconstruction of the international order – only the French trade unionists had called for this at Leeds in a kind of anticipation of the League of Nations – but the logic of the discussion forced them in this direction. There was also the fact that the impulse for the discussion of the postwar order was not just based on the traditional trade union objective of implementing socio-political measures. Just as important was the feeling that postwar demobilisation and the return to a peacetime economy would bring tremendous disruption, and the trade unions would have to take up an attitude to this in good time. On the other hand, these conferences had also served in each case to brand the opposing side as traitors to the goals of the workers' movement, who would rather collaborate with their own capitalists than act in solidarity with the socialists of the opposing camp. These positions, adopted with a view to a final settlement of accounts at the end of the war, lost any meaning after 1918, in view of the challenge from the communists, which was felt equally by both the former warring parties.

The development of the International Trade Secretariats was entirely in line with that of the IFTU. They mainly had their central offices in Germany, and the people in charge of them did roughly the same thing as Legien. They endeavoured to continue their activities, and they concerned themselves particularly with continuing to publish their periodicals, although there were frequent interruptions in the course of the war. These ITSS, which concentrated entirely on immediate professional problems, had actually lost their significance now, since the necessities of war took precedence over all trade-union achievements and the Secretariats did not see it as part of their remit to discuss problems which went beyond the purely professional. But what was at stake here was really a claim to leadership. While they mainly restricted their activities to the distribution of information through their bulletins – no attempt was made to set up international conferences comparable to those organised by the IFTU – there were some attempts to use them for German war propaganda. A particularly crass example was the behaviour of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), which was controlled by the organisation of German transport workers. In the spring of 1917, this organisation sent out a statement to the seamen's trade unions justifying Germany's unrestricted submarine warfare.⁵⁷

57 There is still no systematic study available of the wartime activities of the ITSS. Such a study could be based on examining the information bulletins they issued. Golub (1994) practically ignores these years, no doubt because of the inaccessibility of the source

International co-operation between the syndicalist trade unions, which had only just begun, was also abruptly broken off by the coming of the war. They had to cease publication of their international bulletin, and the international office which had been moved to the headquarters of the NAS practically ceased to exist. Yet unlike the IFTU and its member organisations the 'Syndicalist International', with few exceptions (above all in Italy), remained on an anti-war course (often provoking a repressive reaction from the state in question).⁵⁸ But the Anarcho-Syndicalist peace congress held in El Ferrol in Spain did not cause much of a stir, owing to the breaking off of connections with Central Europe as a result of the war. It was largely Spanish and Portuguese delegates who met there at the end of April 1915; a few Latin American representatives arrived after the congress had already ended, while the Italians and the French were unable to come at all. The event had been prohibited by the government and therefore had to take place in secret. Although it was claimed that the El Ferrol congress had taken an important step towards reconstructing the workers' international by establishing an international committee in Lisbon, this seems to have had no real impact.⁵⁹

In the course of the year 1918, it began to appear that, in view of the exhaustion of the warring parties, the war would soon end in one way or another. It was above all Jan Oudegeest who undertook the most varied endeavours to

material. My remarks here are based on the information given in the minutes of the postwar congresses which re-established the international movement. Bieber (1981, vol. 2, p. 1007) reports the attitude of the ITF, basing his information on the above-mentioned statement to the seamen's trade unions which was published in the *Correspondenzblatt* of the General Commission. Hartmut Simon, interestingly, claims in the concluding remarks of his study that the activities of the ITF ceased in 1916. This is apparently because the ITF Archive (now located at Warwick University) does not contain any material before 1919, the year of its re-foundation (Simon 1993, p. 269). Yet the suspicion arises that the ITF Archive (generally conscientiously administered, unlike the historical archives of other ITSS) was cleansed of such embarrassing material before being handed over to the new Secretariat set up in Amsterdam in 1919.

58 On the development of Syndicalism during the war, see Thorpe 1989, pp. 87–91.

59 The really important event at the El Ferrol congress was the decision to reconstitute the CNT. Once it had been re-founded, the CNT grew in the next three years into an organisation with over a million members. I am grateful to Wayne Thorpe for providing information about this little-known congress. He kindly placed at my disposal a dossier made up of contemporary newspaper reports ('El Congreso de la Paz en el Ferrol', *Tierra y Libertad*, 12 May 1915; 'Congreso internacional de la paz', *Acción Libertaria*, 14 May 1915; 'El Proletariado ante la guerra – Congreso Internacional del Ferrol', *Solidaridad Obrera*, 13 May 1915).

respond to this situation.⁶⁰ On the one hand, he met repeatedly with Legien to discuss the idea of calling an international trade-union congress wherever the peace negotiations were held. On the other hand, he endeavoured to make contact with the trade-union organisations of the Allies, in particular during Gompers's visit to Europe in the summer of 1918.⁶¹ The Allied trade unions did not respond to Oudegeest's initiatives, because they thought they came from Legien. Legien's evident loss of influence mirrored the impending German defeat. The decisive move in this connection came after the end of the war from the Labour Party, which promoted the idea of holding an international conference of socialist parties and trade unions (an 'International Labour and Socialist Conference') in Switzerland, to be preceded by discussions between the socialist parties of the Allies.

Accordingly, numerous representatives of Social Democratic parties and trade unions met in Berne at the beginning of February 1919. Oudegeest was invited by telegram to join this group of people. (He was not in fact able to get there until the penultimate day of the meeting). Within this context, an international trade-union conference was held, from 5–9 February 1919, in parallel with the meeting of the Social Democratic parties, and this laid the foundation for the resuscitation of the IFTU.⁶²

A total of 54 delegates assembled together in Berne. They came from 17 countries in all (Alsace-Lorraine was still counted separately). The absences and new arrivals were significant. The AFL and the Belgian trade unions refused to take part owing to the presence of the Germans, despite intensive efforts by Jouhaux. The Italian socialists would not take part in a conference of 'patriotic socialists', and the CGL followed their lead. (Nevertheless, there was an Italian delegation present, from the *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* [UIL], an organisation that had emerged from the minority of the syndicalists who supported the war). Germany was only represented by a delegation of secondary importance. Legien may have sensed what a polarising effect his presence would have had. He perhaps thought that if the Germans wanted to retain any influence they would have to send representatives who had not identified themselves so

60 Oudegeest himself gave an account of this activity in *Bericht der Zweigstelle Amsterdam*, n.d., pp. 11–14. See also the information in the introduction to Ritter 1980, pp. 30–2, 61–4.

61 See Gompers's own description of his travelling diplomacy, in Gompers 1949, vol. 2, pp. 408–72. See also Taft, pp. 430–2, and Fine 1969, pp. 3–33.

62 Ritter (1980) provides exhaustive documentation on the Berne Conference of February 1919. Here the main stress is laid on the political parties, though the introduction does give a brief account of the trade-union conference (Ritter 1980, p. 65). The main source for the conference is its minutes (*Protokoll der Internationalen Gewerkschafts-Konferenz* 1919).

strongly in public with the war effort. Finally, the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC arrived instead of the GFTU delegates. They initially declared that they had no mandate to attend a trade-union conference, but finally they agreed to take part.⁶³

A number of informal meetings and a preliminary discussion of an official nature were required before it was possible to bring the various contradictory interests under the common umbrella of a unanimously accepted agenda. The status of the conference needed to be clarified, since it was not called officially by the IFTU and therefore would be unable to make any valid decisions. This point concerned above all the painful problem of the headquarters of the IFTU and accordingly the question of who should call the *official* conference. Here the French made a concession: the regular conference should decide the future headquarters of the movement. To regulate the precise way in which the conference would be called it was agreed to set up a commission, which would work out a concrete proposal.

The central issue in the discussions was the content of the socio-political programme with which the trade unions – together with the Social Democratic parties – hoped to be able to influence the shaping of the peace treaties. There was no dispute about the provisions prohibiting child labour, limiting women's working time and establishing a maximum working time for men, securing trade-union rights and implementing social insurance. There was also nothing but agreement to the demand for the establishment of an International Labour Office, which would propel the movement for the protection of workers forward and exert supervision over workers' protection on the basis of an international treaty and with decisive trade-union involvement. This brought up the question of the League of Nations, which the French then made the subject of a specific resolution. The League of Nations would secure a peaceful international order, they said, but it would also contribute to economic welfare, that is to say to the improvement of the workers' situation. This idea met with strong objections from the German side, as well as some reservations on the part of Oudegeest. This, the Germans said, was a matter of general policy.

63 Some of the old problems that had plagued the International Secretariat had now found a kind of solution. The 'Czechoslovak' Trade Union Commission of Bohemia had now risen to the level of an independent national trade-union centre (with the result that the Bohemian German or Sudeten German trade-union movement had to fight to gain representation in the International). The 'broad' socialists of Bulgaria appeared at the conference, whereas the 'narrow' refused to come. They were on the way to becoming the Communist Party of Bulgaria in any case. The two trade-union centres in Bulgaria followed the example of the political parties.

Traditionally, general policy had never been discussed at trade-union conferences. The French reply was marked by exasperation. We know the traditional reservations of the Germans on this point, they said, but they cannot just act as if there had been no war. The war had rendered earlier decisions null and void. We need a clear conception of the League of Nations, they said, so as to be able to confront our own governments effectively. The German representatives were left with no choice but to give way. As a result, the resolution on this point was adopted unanimously, after a few minor alterations. The French and British delegations then declared that despite the behaviour of the German trade unions during the war, which was not exactly exemplary, they rejected all measures of compulsion against the losers of the war, such as the employment of German prisoners of war as forced labourers in France and the continuation of the British naval blockade.

The question of the organisation's further development produced few disagreements in the plenary session, as it had largely been clarified in the commission. It was agreed that a proper official conference would be called jointly by Oudegeest and the Paris information office of the Entente's trade-union centres (in other words, Jouhaux). It would meet 'no later than May'. The problem of which organisations to invite turned out to be more difficult, since a whole series of new national trade-union centres had grown up, and now, with the CGT enjoying much greater influence, old disputed issues again came to the surface. A political rift now separated Jouhaux and the CGT majority from most of the syndicalist organisations, which in turn saw no real difference between the CGT majority and Social Democrats such as Legien. But concessions to the minority on this point might also allow a step towards reconciliation with the growing left-wing opposition within the member organisations.⁶⁴ The conference finally adopted the principle of inviting any organisation that stood on the basis of the class struggle – this was a way of drawing a dividing-line to the right which would exclude Christian and liberal trade unions – and was ready to participate. But individual organisations were not invited by name. Finally a special appeal for the immediate establishment of unity was directed to all countries where there were splits in the trade-union movement.

The trade union *congress*, as it began to describe itself in the meantime in order to underline its more representative and extended character, opened in Amsterdam at the end of July. It had to be preceded by a further preliminary

64 As a concession to the CGT minority, Jouhaux had, for example, taken one of its representatives with him to the conference of Allied workers' organisations held in London in February 1918. The latter had then called for the admission of the IWW and the USI to the forthcoming international trade union conference. (See Antonioli 1990, p. 43).

conference, since the congress would have a broader membership than the old organisation, and the latter's business would have to be wound up in an orderly fashion in advance.⁶⁵ Only the organisations which had belonged to the old IFTU were represented at the preliminary conference, held on 25, 26 and 29 July 1919. Each had two delegates.⁶⁶ After a short exchange of views it was agreed that the proceedings of this meeting too would be made public. The number of delegates each organisation was entitled to send to the congress was settled and Legien's report was approved.

The main issue discussed at the preliminary conference turned out to be a bitter indictment by the Belgians of the German trade unions for their attitude during the war. They had not protested against the injustices done to Belgium, and in particular the deportation of Belgian workers. The accusations became more extensive, and the conference became more agitated, when other delegates, such as the American Gompers, called the Germans to account for other wartime failings, for example their failure to oppose unrestricted submarine warfare. Legien had difficulty in defending himself. He declared that they had done more behind the scenes than it was possible to reveal in public. In any case, they had had no other possibility of taking action. Even if they had imitated the initiative taken by the CGT over the years and issued appropriately anti-militarist resolutions, this would have made no difference, because the situation was stronger than they were. In order to underline this point, he also called 'historical materialism' to his assistance. The other national trade-union centres had not acted any differently, anyway. The other German representatives, Johannes Sassenbach, finally succeeded in calming things down by expressing his regret over the injustices suffered during the war, adding that the German trade unions had done everything they possibly could. They had been guided by the view that this was purely a war of self-defence on Germany's part, and they had therefore never supported imperialism or annexationism. With this declaration he was able to pour oil on troubled waters. Sassenbach's resolution was thoroughly discussed in a conference commission, and the final session of the conference noted it with approval.⁶⁷

65 The minutes of both the preliminary conference and the congress were published in *Bericht über den Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1921*.

66 In fact no more than twelve of the organisations were present. The absentees were mainly from the Balkan countries.

67 Sassenbach's resolution caused much agitation in Germany, as it was branded as a second admission of war guilt, and it led many other trade-union leaders to distance themselves from him, while Legien himself kept quiet about the matter. See the documentation based on the records of the General German Trade Union Federation (ADGB) – the new title

The Amsterdam congress began its work on 28 July and it lasted until 2 August. By then, a number of additional representatives were present in addition to the two delegates from each organisation who had taken part in the preliminary conference. The Spanish delegates arrived late. Alongside them there were representatives of organisations not previously attached to the IFTU. This applied to the new national centres of Luxemburg, under German control until the war, and Czechoslovakia, which had emerged from the prewar Czechoslav Trade Union Association (osč). The TUC too was now represented, although it still formed a joint delegation with the GFTU. There were also two syndicalist organisations: the NAS and the *Freie Vereinigung* (which renamed itself the *Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands* [FAUD] at the end of the year). Some delegates (from Argentina and Hungary) were unable to attend on account of various travelling difficulties, and the delegates from the Italian CGL, which had decided to attend, were unable to do so because they were refused passports.⁶⁸

adopted by the General Commission in the summer of 1919 – in Ruck 1985, pp. 79–89, 94–5 and 120–1. See also Leipart 1929, p. 42.

- 68 The Syndicalist FORA – IX.Congress had sent two delegates to the Amsterdam congress, including its secretary, Sebastián Marotta. They arrived in Europe after the end of its proceedings, and were only able to perform their other task, which was to have discussions with the most important European trade unions. In September 1919, at the CGT congress in Lyon, the latter's leaders facilitated a meeting between the Argentinians and the IFTU executive, at which the FORA – IX.Congress was able to enter formally into the IFTU. They were now commissioned by the IFTU to set the wheels in motion so that other South American trade-union centres could become members and to call a congress of South American trade unions to establish a regional organisation. This never actually happened, however. (Marotta 1961, pp. 279–84, 294–8). From Brazil, too, where the trade-union movement was under similarly strong Syndicalist and Anarchist influence, but completely fragmented, a representative had set out for the IFTU congress. This was António Canelas, the Anarchist printer and editor of the organ of the regional trade-union federation in the north-eastern federal state of Pernambuco. The chief of police in Recife, only too happy to get rid of a dangerous agitator in this way, provided him with a passport and got him employment as a seaman aboard a freighter, which was not so easy in postwar conditions. He arrived in Europe three months before the congress opened, but he still could not take part in it, because he ran out of money and had visa difficulties. As he wrote later, this made it impossible for him to protest at the congress against Gompers's claim to represent both Americas. He made a careful study of the working-class movement in Europe, however, and he published a detailed report on it after his return to Brazil. In the report he expressed his disappointment over the moderation of the European trade-union leaders, particularly the leaders of the CGT. On the other hand, he was impressed by the Bolsheviks, who he thought had overcome their Marxist limitations, clearly under Anarchist influence. The Communist International, however, founded in March 1919, was

The congress claimed to represent a total membership of altogether 19 million trade unionists. This constituted a threefold increase as against the prewar figure.

Since this congress presented itself as founding a new organisation, this had the advantage that no kind of settlement of accounts needed to be made. It was evidently thought that the preliminary conference had already fulfilled this task. At most there were one or two pointed remarks made against the German trade unions during the course of the congress, which was a reminder of the amount of political dynamite that had been concealed.

Three commissions were set up to prepare the various points of the agenda, and they needed to meet first. After this, on 31 July, the plenary sessions began with the discussion of the draft statutes of the IFTU. Only the two syndicalist organisations objected to this discussion, with the argument that the revolutionary part of the trade-union movement was inadequately represented owing to the general circumstances of the time. One should therefore wait until the next congress before deciding on the statutes. But no one else supported them, and they could only announce that in that case they would not join the IFTU. The statutes were then adopted. They covered the basic goals of the IFTU, its structure (which would include congresses, a bureau and two executive bodies – narrower and broader). They also prescribed the way it would function and the rules of membership. Serious disagreements only arose over the allotment of mandates, since they had decided not to keep to the old principle of ‘one vote for every national centre’, but they could not simply use membership figures, because in that case the USA, Germany and Great Britain (the AFL, ADGB and TUC) would have between them amounted to more than half of the delegates at any given congress. They decided, after some hesitation, to reach a compromise. A similar balancing of interests was also arrived at after some discussion on the question of the level of membership dues. Their final decision was to fix on Amsterdam as the headquarters of the movement, as a result of which the IFTU was soon referred to simply as ‘Amsterdam’.

Conflicts of interest again surfaced very strongly in the election of the bureau, consisting of a president, two vice-presidents and two secretaries. The Germans did not think there was a chance that Legien would be elected president, but, together with Oudegeest, they opposed the candidacy of W.A. Appleton,

an association of political parties. As a trade unionist, Canelas argued that the first step should be to form a federation of South American Syndicalists, which would then enter the IFTU as a single unit and push for the acceptance of the communist programme of the Moscow International (Dulles 1973, pp. 23–7 and 93–7). Three years later, as a delegate in Moscow, he would indeed have the opportunity of joining the RILU.

put forward by the GFTU. They were unsuccessful. When Jouhaux was then elected first vice-president in a contest with Legien, neither Legien nor Sassenbach put themselves forward for the post of second vice-president, which went instead to the Belgian candidate. So representatives of the nations which had won the First World War monopolised the top official bodies of the IFTU. Only the Secretariat remained outside this circle, with the election of the two Dutch candidates, Jan Oudegeest and Edo Fimmen.⁶⁹ In view of this situation, the Austrians and Germans preferred to wait until their respective national trade-union executives had made a decision before taking up the seats they were entitled to in the IFTU executive – which included a number of country representatives in addition to the members of the bureau – whereas the other members of the executive were immediately elected by the congress.

The next point to consider was the 'Labour Protection Programme'. The Leeds and Berne conferences had made decisions about this, even if not all the trade unions represented in Amsterdam had been a party to those decisions. The programme in question was originally conceived with a view to its inclusion in a future peace treaty. This had now been done, with the inclusion of the Labour Convention as Part Thirteen of the Versailles Treaty, which also envisaged the establishment of an International Labour Organisation (ILO) attached to the League of Nations. But the delegates in Amsterdam regarded what had been done at Versailles as inadequate. While the AFL representatives considered that the Versailles provisions should not be attacked too strongly, the overwhelming majority of the congress was of another opinion. Jouhaux, while he was prepared to cooperate with the ILO, also formulated some criticisms. He was disappointed that the Allied governments, despite the magniloquence of their previous claims, had achieved so little in the concrete negotiations. He was also very concerned to ensure that the trade unions of the defeated Powers should also be present at the Washington Labour Conference, which was to be held in November, and which had the job of setting up the Labour Office. Otherwise the Washington Conference would have little meaning, and the member organisations of the IFTU should ignore it. Everyone agreed with Jouhaux, except Gompers, who spoke in favour of German participation in the Washington Conference but did not want to make it a condition without which the IFTU would not take part, and the syndicalists, who also opposed, but for other, more fundamental reasons.

69 Fimmen declared that his appointment 'did not coincide with his personal wishes. Nevertheless, he and the Dutch delegation were of the opinion that when the interests of the International were at stake personal considerations must be ignored' (*Bericht über den Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1921*, p. 42).

There followed a number of resolutions on smaller matters. The congress stated its opposition to the Allied blockade of Russia and the Hungarian Soviet Republic – the AFL voted against this – and it unanimously agreed to carry out an investigation of the trade-union movement in Russia. The demand for complete socialisation of the economy was rejected by the AFL and the syndicalists – in each case for very different reasons. The syndicalists were the only ones to vote against the resolution that welcomed the establishment of the League of Nations.

They also issued a declaration that the whole course of the congress had only made it plain that it was not capable of carrying out the political tasks placed on the agenda by the contemporary situation. For that reason, the syndicalists said, they were unable to recommend their organisations to enter the IFTU. The congress finally ended with a series of conciliatory and optimistic resolutions. Even though one could not simply forget the past, and there had been many disputes at the congress, the hope was expressed that the jointly agreed statutes and the programme would strengthen them to go forward to the future.

For the moment these were just fine words. The congress had shown that there were many unresolved differences: firstly between the old belligerents, then between the different types of trade-union movement (though this disagreement was between the AFL on one side and all the Europeans on the other side in regard to the attitude towards socialist objectives – leaving aside the syndicalist minority), and finally between big and small countries. When the congress closed its doors, it appeared doubtful whether the IFTU could continue to exist for a long period under these circumstances. The same point was also valid, of course, for the ITSS, who stood before similar problems in trying to reconstruct themselves. It is true that the conflict over the German attitude during the war was soon overcome, and Legien was appointed at the December meeting of the ADGB Committee as a member of the IFTU executive for Germany and Austria.⁷⁰ But there was practically no discussion of the actual challenge of the epoch at this congress.⁷¹ Only the two small syndicalist organ-

70 Ruck 1985, pp. 120–1.

71 Leaving aside the resolutions against the blockade of Russia and on sending an investigative delegation there, the Russian problem was only raised once, by a delegate from the NAS, who expressed the opinion that in addition to admitting Germany to the Washington Labour Conference they should also invite Russia. In fact there is some doubt as to whether Russia was actually invited to the Amsterdam congress. The left opposition at the Swiss Trade Union Congress of April 1919 was explicitly told that this had been done. But at the congress itself, and at the preliminary conference, reference was only made to invitations to the Balkan countries, which had not responded. There was no word of an

isations gave some hint of this (although in the last resort they did not keep up the pressure). The challenge would come soon enough from Moscow.

invitation being sent to Russia, so that it is no longer possible to establish whether this assertion at the Swiss Trade Union Congress was actually true.

In Search of a Revolutionary Trade Union International

1 The International Politics of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions 1917–20

In Russia, the February Revolution of 1917 made a tremendous upsurge of trade-union activity possible. Four months after the fall of the Tsar, the ‘Third Russian Trade Union Conference’ met in Petrograd (20–28 June [3–11 July]).¹ The characterisation of the meeting as a ‘conference’ rather than a ‘congress’ indicated its provisional nature, even though now for the first time it was possible to elect an all-Russian executive, the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions [*Vserossiiskii Tsentral’nyi Sovet Professional’nykh Soiuzov*, abbreviated as VTsSPS]. In any case, the conference’s essential task was to call a trade-union congress as quickly as possible. It laid down the principle of industrial unions (this would take several months to put into effect, however) and it discussed, as the main question at stake, the tactics of the trade unions towards the government and the employers. Two major blocs opposed each other on this question: on the one hand, the ‘group of internationalists’, gathered around the Bolsheviks, a faction which was led by two veteran party cadres, Pavel Miliutin and Gregory Zinoviev, joined in the following weeks by other people who were ‘factionally independent’ and associated with the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Syndicalists but took the Bolshevik side on the issue. This group was represented at the conference by David Riazanov and Solomon Dridzo, better known as Lozovsky. The other bloc was the ‘group of supporters of trade union unity’ (who were to describe themselves after 1917 as ‘autonomists’, or defenders of the independence [*nezavisimost’*] of the trade unions from the party and the state, but now, before the Bolshevik seizure of power, were supporters of the Provi-

¹ On the decision to call this conference and its course, see Shkliarevsky 1993, pp. 68, 72–9; Brüggmann 1972, pp. 58–77; and Garvi 1981, pp. 17–23. The minutes of this conference were first published ten years later, by the Commission for the Study of the History of the Trade Union Movement of Russia and the USSR (*Istprof*), with a detailed introduction by Iury Milonov (*Tret’ia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia 1927*). This is now also available as a reprint with an informative preface by Diane Koenker (Koenker 1982).

sional Government). This group was led by the Mensheviks – their most prominent speaker was Grinevich, a veteran of the trade-union movement before 1914 – but the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Bundists also formed part of it.

The Menshevik-led bloc had a relative majority of the 211 delegates, but they did not win every vote because there was a large number of non-party delegates, and both factions fought a fierce battle to gain their support. The ‘supporters of unity’ were in the majority on the question of the way the trade unions saw themselves. The conference resolved that they were organisations of economic struggle rather than having more general political objectives, which implied that they would co-operate with the Provisional Government in running the economy rather than fight for its overthrow and the seizure of power by the Soviets. On the other hand, the Bolsheviks won a majority on the admissibility of strike action. The trade unions rejected the compulsory arbitration procedures that the Mensheviks wanted to introduce and declared that they would lead the economic struggle against the capitalists. On one point both factions agreed, however, even after the October Revolution: they were opposed to any independent role for the factory committees, which as organs of ‘workers’ control’ tended to undermine the influence of the trade unions in the factories.² So the conference adopted the position advocated by a representative of the Bolsheviks, Nikolai Glebov-Avilov. This was that the factory committees should be transformed into organs of the trade unions at the factory level, and thus made subordinate to them.

Given the impending crisis of the revolution, the international relations of the Russian trade unions could only be of marginal interest at this stage. Grinevich concluded his speech on the tasks of the trade unions with a call for the re-establishment of the IFTU. He recalled that in 1907, at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, the Russian trade unions had entered the ‘international family of workers’ organisations’ and that the St. Petersburg metalworkers had joined the International Metalworkers’ Federation (IMF). He himself had always stayed in contact with the German General Commission. The Russian trade unions had also received financial support from fraternal

2 It is true that the Bolsheviks temporarily advocated a greater role for the Factory Committees in the following months – after the July Days – but this only lasted as long as the Soviets and the trade unions were still firmly in Menshevik and SR hands. After October they were quick to remove their independence. Their only consistent defenders were the Russian Anarcho-Syndicalists. There are several comprehensive discussions of this question: Shkliarevsky 1993; Smith 1983; Brinton 1970 and Sirianni 1982.

organisations outside the country. But he failed to give any information on what he thought of the behaviour of the international trade-union leaders during the war, or on how he saw the restoration of the IFTU in concrete terms.³

This point was then immediately taken up by the Bolshevik delegates. Militin, the other main speaker, reproached Grinevich in this way: if one is talking about international socialism, one has to say which of its representatives one is referring to. Is it the defenders of the fatherland and the chauvinists? Or is it the internationalists? Skliar from Nikolaev and Bakhutov from the Moscow central bureau spoke on similar lines. The latter explicitly called for the foundation of a new International instead of the restoration of the old one.⁴

In his closing speech, Grinevich responded polemically to these suggestions, objecting to the way the matter was being 'politicised': 'What we have here is a trade union conference. It is not important who is in the right, who is guilty or not. It is no business of ours to make these judgements'. Karl Liebknecht was a friend of his, he said, and he was able to say that he too was opposed to any split in the movement.⁵

This argument allowed Grinevich to ward off an amendment proposed by Riazanov to his resolution on the tasks of the trade unions, which called for the restoration of the International to be carried out solely by the trade unions which had opposed the war.⁶ Grinevich's resolution, as finally adopted by the conference, referred only to the need for the Russian trade unions to join 'the existing international association'.⁷

Before the conference ended, however, the question of political involvement surfaced once again, when Riazanov, speaking for the 'internationalists', demanded that a resolution written by Zinoviev be read out to the conference. This concerned the relationship between the trade unions and the socialist parties. It had not been possible for Zinoviev to be present at the appropriate time – according to *Pravda* – and so the whole discussion on this point was abandoned, and the resolution was ignored, because he had not met the deadline for handing in the resolution. Zinoviev's resolution, relying on earlier decisions by the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International, had upheld close co-operation between parties and trade unions, and had rejected

3 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 88–90.

4 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 92–3 and 103–5.

5 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 144–5.

6 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 164–5. There were 78 votes in favour of Riazanov's amendment and 98 against.

7 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, p. 446.

the slogan of trade-union 'neutrality'. In the wartime situation, he continued, this meant the trade unions had to oppose the defence of the fatherland and support internationalism. The resolution ended with this paragraph: 'The All-Russian trade union movement must take the initiative for the restoration of the international organisation of the trade union movement, but only with the participation of those trade unions which have rejected and still reject the imperialist war and have not abandoned the ground of the class struggle'.⁸ Riazanov's proposal was followed by a sharp exchange of words between him and Grinevich. The conference rejected the proposal by a narrow majority, but Riazanov was able to use the opportunity to justify the vote of the 'internationalists' against Grinevich's resolution on the tasks of the trade unions. The trade unions must fight against the imperialist war, he said, and only support those parties which come out in support of the same objective, and he went on to recall the wording of his earlier amendment.⁹

It was perhaps not clear to all the delegates that the trade-union international had already existed separately from the Second International before 1914, not to speak of the difference between the IFTU and the International Trade Secretariats. But at this stage what both the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks were concerned with were the political principles which ought to underlie the reconstruction of the international workers' organisations. What concrete forms the relationship between the trade-union international and the political international would have to assume, and whether they should both live under one roof or form parallel international organisations, were questions that certainly were far removed from the preoccupations of the delegates at the conference.

We can get some idea of the way Grinevich and the Mensheviks conceived the restoration of the trade-union international, and the political direction it should take, from the expression of gratitude he directed in his opening speech to the AFL vice-president, James Duncan. The latter was the only international guest who attended the conference, and he had pronounced a speech greeting the assembled delegates in very general terms, which, ironically enough, was translated by Riazanov. Apart from expressing his hopes for ever-closer co-operation between the workers of Russia and America, and for the introduction of economic democracy, he declared his conviction that the USA had entered the war 'without any selfish motive'. America and Russia together formed an

8 The resolution, together with an extract from *Pravda*, was published in the appendix to *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 475–6.

9 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 394–7.

alliance of honour, and it was the duty of both countries to pursue the war to a successful conclusion. Duncan was a close associate of Gompers, and as such a very right-wing AFL leader. He would therefore have been somewhat embarrassed by Grinevich's speech thanking him for attending the conference, in which he pointed proudly to the red flag hanging on the wall and addressed him as 'comrade'. Also, unlike Duncan, Grinevich referred to the war as a 'fratricidal' conflict. The very serious difference of opinion revealed by these words did not, however, prevent Grinevich from expressing his hope for the immediate restoration of a united international.¹⁰

The Bolshevik Party approved the attitude of its conference delegates at its Sixth Party Congress, held a month and a half later. In his report to the Sixth Congress on the conference and the position in the trade-union movement, Glebov-Avilov confirmed the Bolsheviks' opposition to the international trade-union conference called by Legien for June 1917 in Stockholm. Two resolutions on trade-union questions were put forward at the Congress, but they were transmitted to the Central Committee for further examination, as there were more urgent matters to discuss in view of the overall situation in the country. They simply repeated the position that the international unification of the trade unions could only be done by people who were opposed to the war and had not abandoned the ground of the class struggle.¹¹

10 *Tret'ia vs Rossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 157–8. James Duncan (1857–1928) had been the first vice-president of the AFL since 1900, and he represented it at the Budapest Congress of the International Secretariat in 1911. He was a member of the 'Root Mission', which President Wilson sent to Russia under the direction of the Republican politician Elihu Root after the USA's entry into the war in 1917. The mission consisted mainly of businessmen, but in order to impress the Russian left, both the trade unionist Duncan and another man, a Socialist who was strongly in favour of the war, were added to it. In the words of George Kennan, this showed Wilson's 'lack of appreciation' of the political position of even the moderate Russian left. 'The thought that a man like Duncan would have any natural intimacy with Russian socialists was indeed farfetched; and the choice became an object of derision not only for contemporaries, but also for future Soviet historians' (Kennan 1956, p. 22). The subject is treated in detail in the chapter 'American Labor and the Root Commission to Russia' in Radosh 1969, pp. 72–102. Incidentally, the unofficial international organ of the German trade unions and the SPD during the war, the *Internationale Korrespondenz*, poked fun at Duncan's extensive report of his journey to Russia, made in November 1917 to a congress of the AFL, referring to 'the pitiful childishness of his way of looking at things' which was a 'source of amusement' ('Wie Russland durch James Duncan belehrt wurde', *Internationale Korrespondenz*, no. 80, 23 March 1918).

11 The resolutions are printed in: *Shestoi S'ezd RSDRP (b)* 1958, pp. 228–35, 263–5. This

The Third Conference was significant, as Iury Milonov wrote ten years later in his preface to the published version of the minutes, because the discussions of the first and second trade-union congresses (held in 1918 and 1919, respectively) were still determined by the positions put forward in 1917. Since the Mensheviks still had a majority at the Third Conference, they were able to take their stand on its decisions, whereas the Bolsheviks could only reply by referring to their minority standpoint at the conference, which had been put forward with determination at the time.¹² On the question of the International, which no doubt had a fairly subordinate significance for the delegates in 1917, one can add that the positions put forward then anticipated future developments right up to the 1930s. While one side was advocating the restoration of a 'united' trade-union international, the other side was endeavouring to create an unambiguously revolutionary alternative.

The composition of the new leadership elected at the conference, the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS), reflected the majority position of the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs). There were 16 Menshevik members and three SRs, while the 'internationalist' bloc had a total of 16 representatives in all. The Mensheviks had a slight predominance in the highest leadership positions. They controlled the Presidium through its chairman (Grinevich) and one vice-chairman (Chirkin) plus the treasurer (Kammermacher-Kefali). The left was represented by another vice-chairman (Riazanov) and the secretary (Lozovsky). The Executive Committee of the VTsSPS consisted of two Mensheviks and two Bolsheviks.¹³

There is one further respect in which this conference is important for the future international communist trade-union movement, and that is that here Lozovsky – alongside Riazanov – gained prominence as one of the leading Bolshevik trade unionists (although both of them only joined the Bolshevik Party formally after the conference was over). Lozovsky had gained experience in exile in the French trade-union movement, which made it easier for him to take a position on most of the questions discussed by the conference. He differed in this respect from most of the Bolshevik delegates at the conference, who had spent long years in underground work for the party, but had only car-

question was not of particular importance to the Bolsheviks at that time, as is shown by the fact that the paper they published in Stockholm between September and November 1917, *Der Bote der russischen Revolution*, did not contain a single article on the trade-union international.

12 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. xviii–xix.

13 *Tret'ia vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1982, pp. 469–70.

ried out trade-union activities in very rare cases.¹⁴ As secretary of the VTsSPS, he now occupied a key position for the creation of a new Russian trade-union centre.¹⁵

The VTsSPS was only built up slowly, during the weeks and months that followed the Third Conference. It met a total of three times between then and the First Congress. In addition, Grinevich withdrew from his position as chairman in September 1917, during the 'Democratic Conference', because the majority of the trade-union representatives present rejected the coalition government he advocated there. The Left Menshevik Chirkin then took over from him. The central organ of the VTsSPS, *Professional'nyi Vestnik*, only appeared irregularly. Lozovsky, in the words of a Menshevik delegate to the First Congress, was the Central Council's 'sole active functionary'.¹⁶

It is obvious that the Russian trade-union leadership was not in a position to attach any priority to international questions. Even so, one of the first steps of the Central Council's Executive Committee was to issue a proclamation to the international trade-union movement in which it announced that a central Russian trade-union leadership had been established.¹⁷ But its first opportunity to step onto the international stage was not to be taken up. When discussions took place in the Central Council about the sending of a delegation to the socialist peace negotiations planned to take place in Stockholm in the summer of 1917, the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions could not agree on whether they

14 Old Bolshevik cadres of this type, who lacked any trade-union experience comparable to that of Lozovsky or Riazanov, but who were important representatives of the 'internationalist' wing of the conference, included Miliutin, Glebov-Avilov, Bakhutov, V.V. Shmidt, Matrosov, Ozol and Shliapnikov. Not all of them had a future role to play in the trade-union movement. The future chair of the Soviet trade-union organisation, M.P. Tomsky, took part in the conference, according to data he supplied to the party later, but he did not speak at any point. See *Deiateli SSSR*, 1989, p. 719.

15 Lozovsky was not elected chairman of Russia's trade unions at the first trade-union congress, held three months after the October Revolution. The reason for this, of course, was that shortly after his re-entry into the Bolshevik Party (he had already been a party member at one time, before the war) he clashed with the party leadership over the independence of the trade unions and was expelled.

16 *Pervyi vsereossiiskii s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, p. 52. Cf. also Diane Koenker's introduction to the reprint of the conference minutes: 'Lozovsky appears to have almost single-handedly held the national union movement together after the June Conference' (Koenker 1982, p. xxiii*). On the way the VTsSPS was organised at this time, see Milonov 1927, pp. 18–19.

17 According to Grinevich, speaking at the First Congress (*Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, p. 47).

should only attend the 'official conference' of the Second International or also take part in the meeting of the Zimmerwald movement, which was due to be held in Stockholm as well.¹⁸

Another invitation was also rejected at this time, for different reasons, connected most probably with the interruption of transport links as a result of the war. The Swiss Trade Union Federation sent an invitation on 30 June 1917 to all national trade-union centres, following up on the Stockholm trade-union conference, and this included even centres like the VTsSPS which had not been members of the IFTU before the war. The Swiss invitation was to an international discussion in Berne. The VTsSPS had to reply that it was not in a position to accept the invitation, but it declared its readiness in general to support the restoration of trade-union unity.¹⁹ (The difficulties in the way of communication are shown by the fact that this reply had not even arrived by October, when the conference took place. Legien was only indirectly informed afterwards, via the Finnish national trade-union centre).²⁰ The VTsSPS also exchanged greetings with the Parliamentary Committee of the TUC.²¹ Anyhow, all these activities showed that the VTsSPS was recognised internationally as the official leadership of the Russian trade-union movement.

The proceedings of the First Russian Trade Union Congress, which met between 7–14 (20–27 N.S.) January 1918,²² were entirely dominated by the Bolshevik seizure of power, which had of course also affected the atmosphere in the trade unions. It was characterised by fierce and repeated clashes and much heckling, and the sessions were often interrupted. The Constituent Assembly was dissolved while the congress was meeting. As a result, the trade unions became institutions of the new state, which now had the task of supporting the government, described at the time as a process of 'statification' [*Verstaatung*]

18 According to Lozovsky at the First Congress (*Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, p. 57).

19 The Swiss letter is preserved in GARF 5451/13a/1, and was printed in *Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund. Bericht* 1917, pp. 21–4, and also in *Internationaler Gewerkschaftsbund. Bericht* 1919, pp. 58–61, and in *Professional'nyi vestnik*, no. 1–2, 1 September 1917. The answer of the VTsSPS is printed in *Professional'nyi vestnik*, no. 3–4, 15 October 1917.

20 See *Protokoll der Internationalen Gewerkschafts-Konferenz* 1917, p. 5; and *Bericht der Zweigstelle Amsterdam* 1919, p. 10.

21 *Professional'nyi vestnik*, no. 3–4, 15 October 1917.

22 On this congress in general, apart from the minutes (*Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918), see Brüggmann 1972, pp. 158–72 and Garvi 1981, pp. 32–43. There are extracts from the materials and resolutions of the First Congress in Bunyan and Fisher (eds.) 1934, pp. 638–42.

(this is how Brüggemann translates the word '*ogosudarstvlenie*'). The Mensheviks in contrast called for the 'independence' [*nezavisimost'*] of the trade unions from any kind of subordination to the party and the state, while Lozovsky, who had been expelled from the Bolshevik Party some days earlier, vacillated between the two camps, but initially took a firm stand against the Bolshevik position. While expressing his support for the class struggle and Soviet power, he put forward his own conception of 'autonomy' [*samostoiatel'nost'*].²³ Despite the majority they gained at the congress, the Bolsheviks were not yet able to establish a new, stable trade-union leadership. Zinoviev was elected as the new chair of the VTsSPS. Although he had dealt repeatedly with trade-union questions from a theoretical point of view in the past, in particular as a tireless propagandist for the Bolshevik line on the question of their relationship with the party,²⁴ his other functions involved so much work that he was unable to give the proper attention to the post of head of the trade-union movement. (It was only a few months later, following the Fourth Trade Union Conference, that a proper leading group was formed, centred on M.P. Tomskey).²⁵ In any case, Lozovsky soon lost the central position he had held in the leadership as Secretary. For the next two years he continued to occupy a number of less important positions in the trade-union area, but it was not until he and his little group of 'Social Democrat Internationalists' again drew close to the Bolsheviks, in the course of 1919, finally joining them in December, that he again rose up the trade union hierarchy.

The 'international proletariat' was represented at this first congress by a number of prominent left-wing opponents of the war (there were two Swedish Left Socialists, alongside Fritz Platten from Switzerland and Christian Rakovsky from Romania). The congress also voted to send greetings to the workers of Austria, after hearing reports of strikes there.²⁶ In view of the many urgent problems that faced them, however, international trade-union matters only played a subordinate role. In his report for the Organisation Commission originally elected by the second conference of Russian trade unions in 1906, Grinevich once again described the way they had entered the ranks of international trade unionism at the Stuttgart Congress of 1907. The resolution on the 'Tasks of the

23 *Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, pp. 38 and 97.

24 On this point, see volume six of his collected writings, issued under the title *Partiia i profsoiuzy* (Zinoviev 1929).

25 On the formation of the new Bolshevik leadership of the VTsSPS, see Milonov 1927, pp. 20–2.

26 *Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, pp. 19 and 136–7.

Trade Unions', which was finally pushed through by the Bolshevik majority, contained the obligatory section on the International. It appealed for an international trade-union conference to be convened, in these words:

The Russian trade union movement cannot fulfil its gigantic tasks without entering into the closest association with the international trade union movement. The Congress considered it to be an obligation to devote its best efforts to promoting the rebirth of the international trade union movement and it places on the agenda the calling of a series of international trade union congresses for each trade, as well as a general international trade union congress. It has decided, as a first step in this direction, to call an international trade union conference for 15 February in Petrograd.²⁷

There were some reservations expressed about this highly optimistic choice of date for the conference. Tomskey had suggested 15 March in the course of the discussion, while Lozovsky formulated the date vaguely as 'the earliest possible time'.²⁸ But they failed to get their way. Apart from this, there was no more extensive discussion of international perspectives. One reason for this was perhaps that most of the delegates had other priorities in the given situation. Another reason, which certainly played a part, was that by this time the Bolsheviks had modified their position. They had abandoned their vehemently expressed demand made six months earlier that a conference should be limited exclusively to trade unions which were in opposition to the war. As a result, this passage in the resolution was formulated in such a way that the Mensheviks could not argue against it (though of course they fiercely opposed the sections dealing with tasks within Russia, which were of much greater consequence). It may be that the Bolsheviks were so concerned to find potential international interlocutors that they did not want to saddle themselves with one more conflict.

But they also hoped, above all, that when the Western European trade-union movement was reconstructed the revolutionary forces would gain the majority, as had happened in Russia. The IFTU was still missing from the scene, and it was scarcely imaginable that its rebirth as an organisation would come to pass in such a relatively unproblematic manner as happened in 1919, given the way trade-union leaders from the two wartime alliances were polemicising against

²⁷ *Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, p. 365.

²⁸ *Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, p. 129.

each other. At this time, too, the Bolsheviks were unreservedly praising the Western European trade-union movement, in very general terms, it is true, for its past successes, its strength and its role as a model for others. That was the gist of Tomskey's remarks, for example, in the introduction he wrote in September 1918 to the published minutes of the First Congress.²⁹ In fact Tomskey referred back several times in 1920, in connection with the foundation of *Mezhsoyprof* (in English, International Trade Union Council, abbreviated as ITUC), to the considerations that still motivated them in 1918:

In that period, our tactics were to restore connections with the trade unions of Western Europe in general, whatever their tendency or platform. Our view of how to achieve this was that we would enter into contact with the trade unions of other countries by calling a conference, and in the process of joint work discover people who supported our revolutionary platform and could unite with us. We naturally knew that the Western European trade union movement ... was still controlled by reformist and opportunist elements. But we hoped that if we entered into a general association with it at conferences, congresses and so on, we would be able drive out the reformists and tear away the working masses from them by engaging in a determined struggle and as a result of the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses. We believed that, notwithstanding our differences of opinion with the reformists, there still remained something in common that would allow us to unite on some kind of platform.³⁰

The fourth trade-union conference, which met in March 1918, convened in a very difficult situation. On the one hand, the period was one of decisive and

29 *Pervyi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1918, pp. i–xi. See his comments on page i. This attitude was also demonstrated by the decision to send an official of the People's Commissariat of Labour, Paul Olberg, to Germany in October 1918 to collect information on how social policy was conducted. Olberg, a Menshevik, did not return to Soviet Russia. He remained in emigration, working from time to time for the German trade unions. (See his letters of October 1918 in File 577, ADGB Documents, August Bebel Institute [Friedrich Ebert Stiftung]).

30 Taken from an article in issue no. 1, October 1920, of *Vestnik Truda*, the periodical of the VTsSPS, reprinted in Tomskey 1928, pp. 39–51, here pp. 39–40. There are similar comments in speeches by Tomskey at a meeting of the communist fraction in the VTsSPS on 16 October 1920, and at the Conference of the Trade Union of Local Transport Workers on 18 October 1920 (Tomskey 1928, pp. 54 and 80–1).

rapid developments, involving the outbreak of the Civil War, the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk peace treaty and the country's ever-worsening economic collapse; and on the other hand, there was a leadership crisis in the movement itself, headed only in a nominal sense by Zinoviev.³¹ The fourth conference was forced to admit that the call for an international conference issued by the VTsSPS had met with no response. It instructed the newly elected Executive Committee of the VTsSPS to send out another appeal.³² This was published just before 1 May, and in it the Executive Committee addressed itself to 'all the trade unions of the world' but in a somewhat more cautious manner than previously, calling on them to send representatives to Moscow by 1 June, to discuss 'the time, the place, the participants and the agenda' of an international conference.³³ In his commentary, Tomskey underlined the significance that the Bolsheviks attached to this appeal, although he also implied that no immediate results could be expected from it:

We should naturally be great optimists if we were to hope that our appeal would at one single stroke persuade the obdurate opportunists who stand at the head of the Western European and American trade union movements to become internationalists and break with the politics of bourgeois armistice, 'defence' and 'neutrality'. But we hope that our appeal gets through to the masses of the international proletariat, revealing to them the true character and objectives of the Russian trade union movement ... and causing them to push their leaders towards genuine class struggles. We have said our piece, and the reply to our appeal will depend on the masses, not on the leaders. And whatever the practical result of it may be, there is no doubt that the significance of this appeal stretches far beyond the present day.³⁴

The appeal was transmitted by radio-telegram to Western Europe. In the autumn of 1918, the Bolsheviks issued a further invitation, this time to take part in the Second Russian Trade Union Congress (16 January to 25 January 1919). But when the congress met, Tomskey, who since 9 October 1918 had been the acting

31 On the fourth trade-union conference in general, see Brüggmann 1972, pp. 199–202; Garvi 1981, pp. 42–5; and the extract from a resolution printed in Bunyan and Fisher 1934, pp. 644–5. The minutes are printed in *IV. Vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1923.

32 *IV. Vserossiiskaia Konferentsiia* 1923, p. 66.

33 This appeal, taken from the VTsSPS organ *Professional'nyi Vestnik*, no. 5–6, is printed in Tomskey 1928, pp. 7–9.

34 'Pervoe maia 1918 goda', Tomskey 1928, pp. 10–13.

chairman of the Russian trade unions,³⁵ was obliged to report to it that 'all our appeals have met with no response at all'. The reason he gave was that while the reformist trade-union leaders did not want to come to Russia, the internationalists were unable to come, since they were not permitted to travel.³⁶ Lozovsky replied laconically that the radio-telegrams had been received in London, Berlin and Paris not by the central trade-union offices but by the telegraph clerks, who had thrown them in the waste-paper basket. 'It is senseless to imagine', he added, 'that one can establish a connection by radio-telegraph when these radio-telegraphs are still in the hands of Messrs. Clemenceau and Lloyd-George'.³⁷

In fact the Central Council of Trade Unions had already taken one further step. In the middle of 1918, a representative for Western Europe was appointed.³⁸ His name was Naum Shats. He remained in Switzerland as a member of the Soviet mission there – Switzerland had recognised the Soviet government *de facto* and the Russians had replied by sending a diplomatic mission – until the whole mission was expelled, on 12 November, for carrying out 'revolutionary propaganda'.³⁹ On 19 September, he presented himself to the Federal

35 This information is given in a footnote in Tomskey 1928, p. 516.

36 *Vtoroi vserossiiskii s'ezd* 1921, p. 21. On the Second Russian Trade Union Congress in general, see Garvi 1981, pp. 54–73.

37 *Vtoroi vserossiiskii s'ezd* 1921, p. 33.

38 Pankratov 1972, p. 81.

39 The author asked the Swiss Federal Archives about him, and they were not able to do more than confirm that he did belong to the Soviet mission, send a copy of his passport photograph and reveal that his name was on the list of members of the Soviet mission who were to be expelled. (E21/10356, 10399, 10438 and 10528. Information provided on 18 May 1995). This Shats was presumably the Old Bolshevik described by Fritz Heckert (Heckert 1935, p. 232) in the following words: 'I lived in Switzerland between 1908 and 1912, and there I got to know Lenin's doctrine and the struggle he was engaged in more closely. On the day when Gershuni's body was transferred from Zürich to Paris a young Russian was marching alongside me who had arrived in Zürich the very same day, having escaped from captivity in Siberia. As this comrade was penniless and did not even possess any identity documents, we took him with us and lived together with him for a number of years, until he emigrated to Paris. This young Russian from Proskurov, whose name was Alex Fuhrmann, or alternatively Naum Shats, was a passionate Bolshevik. He soon took on a number of functions in the Russian exile community in Zürich, and he took a lively part in 1908 and 1909 in all the wide-ranging debates raging at that time between the God-Seekers and the rest ... One day I was with Shats in Zürich ... Suddenly he pointed out two people walking along the street ... "The small one over there is our leader, that is Lenin" he said ... I learned a certain amount about Lenin's position from what Shats told me, in his broken Russian-German speech, about the struggle between the Bolsheviks and the

Committee of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions 'as the representative of the Russian trade unions, who had been given the solemn mission of organising an international trade union conference'.⁴⁰ On 24 September, he addressed a meeting of the Federal Committee. He succeeded in impressing his listeners with his report on the 'tremendous growth of the Russian trade unions in a short time'. They now numbered three and a half million members, he said. 'There are no political disagreements among them. The Bolsheviks certainly have the majority, but supporters of other political tendencies also work with them. The importance of the Russian trade unions is still not sufficiently recognised in Western Europe'.⁴¹ After a short discussion, the committee adopted a resolution produced by Shats expressing their 'joy at the successes of the Russian trade unions'. It explicitly welcomed the initiative of the VTsSPS in calling an international trade-union conference 'with the task of restoring international trade union connections'. In addition, the meeting sharply condemned the offensive of the Central Powers and the Entente against Soviet Russia.⁴²

A little later, the Swiss trade unions also received an invitation to despatch a five- or six-strong delegation to Russia. The Russians would cover the cost (2,500 francs a head). After this resolution had been adopted, people in Russia evidently expected that the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions would turn out to be the catalyst of international trade-union unification, on the basis of Switzerland's neutral position, in the same way as it had acted in earlier years in response to Legien's initiatives. They also certainly still had illusions in Moscow about the radicalisation of the Swiss workers' movement, which had in fact not yet reached its climax, although this was about to happen with the general strike of 12–14 November 1918. The defeat of this strike also accelerated the split in Swiss Social Democracy. It should be noted that the Bolsheviks hoped that they could take advantage of these developments. In any case, the Swiss trade unions were somewhat divided as to whether to accept the invitation. Finally, at the end of November, the Federal Committee noted that in view

Mensheviks'. It was impossible to find out whether Shats later returned to Russia – perhaps after the outbreak of the 1917 revolution – and was sent from there to Switzerland, nor was it possible to discover what happened to him after his expulsion from that country. Anyway, Alfred E. Senn does not mention him in his standard work on the 1918 Soviet diplomatic mission in Switzerland (Senn 1974), possibly because owing to the nature of his activities Shats did not appear much in public.

40 *Bericht des Bundeskomitees* 1920, p. 72.

41 *Protokoll der 39. Sitzung*, n.d., pp. 22–3.

42 'Der Schweizerische Gewerkschaftsbund' 1918, p. 84.

of the expulsion of Shats along with the rest of the Soviet mission, the whole matter had ceased to be relevant.⁴³ Shats had also failed to write the articles he agreed to write for the trade-union press.⁴⁴

While still in Switzerland, Shats had also attempted to get into contact with Oudegeest in Amsterdam, as another 'neutral' mediator between Legien and the Entente trade-union federations. But his letter to Oudegeest did not reach its destination. Karl Dürr, the secretary of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, wrote to Oudegeest offering to establish contact with Shats. But Oudegeest does not seem to have thought this worth considering. In his report on his activities he simply mentions Dürr's offer without commenting on it.⁴⁵ In any case, with the expulsion of Shats from Switzerland, the Russian trade unions lost their only foothold in Western Europe. Tomsy had to admit at the Second Trade Union Congress in January 1919 that his endeavours had been fruitless.⁴⁶

Lozovsky was as merciless in condemning this failure as he had been in pouring scorn on the idea of radio-telegrams. Here is how he dealt with Tomsy's report to the Second Congress of Trade Unions: 'I am sure that Comrade Tomsy recognises that merely to send a delegate to Switzerland was to do very, very little in this area, and that it was possible to do very much more'.⁴⁷

In making this criticism Lozovsky was probably engaging in a factional polemic rather than pointing genuinely at missed opportunities in other countries. He was, after all, not to be readmitted to the Bolshevik Party for almost another year. In Sweden, the other important neutral country, the trade-union movement was firmly in the hands of the Social Democrats, the left wing of which (the later communist party) had already split off. Soviet Russia had had diplomatic relations with Germany since the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. But, for obvious reasons, the busy diplomatic mission headed by Ambassador Ioffe had

43 *Protokoll der 40.Sitzung*, n.d., pp. 3–4. The question of sending a delegation to Russia did not come up again until the spring of 1920.

44 *Bericht des Bundeskomitees* 1920, p. 72.

45 *Bericht Zweigstelle Amsterdam* n.d., p. 11.

46 *Vtoroi S'ezd* 1921, p. 21; he said the same thing a year later at the Third Congress (*Tretii S'ezd* 1921, p. 34).

47 *Vtoroi S'ezd* 1921, p. 33. In any case, the Shats Mission was soon forgotten, no doubt because of its lack of success. It is not even mentioned in the written business report of the VTsSPS to the Second Congress (in *Professional'nyi Vestnik*, no. 1 [27], 20 January 1919). Nor did it appear in the section on international activities included in the next report, on the year 1919 (*Otchet Vserossiiskogo Tsentral'nogo Soveta* 1920, pp. 56–9). In October 1920, Tomsy only mentioned the Swiss Social Democrat Fritz Platten when discussing attempts to make contact with the Western European workers' movement. (Tomsy 1928, p. 54). Presumably Platten had helped to facilitate Shats's contacts in Switzerland.

no intention at all of engaging in discussions with the General Commission. Moreover, the resolution adopted by the Second Trade Union Congress on the VTsSPS report made it plain that at that time, when the Russian Civil War was at its height, there could be no realistic possibility of achieving the international trade-union connections they desired. In the VTsSPS report, the question of the international unification of the trade unions did remain on the agenda, but it was mentioned in the same breath as the organisation of Russia's agricultural workers, a subject on which there could indeed be further discussions.⁴⁸

The most the Bolsheviks could do in this situation was comment from the sidelines rather than intervening actively. It soon became clear that the reorganisation of the IFTU would take its course without their involvement. The new presidium of the VTsSPS elected by the Second Trade Union Congress had to address the subject of the Berne Conference at its very first session. It had only just heard that it had been arranged for 5 February. Although it was rightly assumed that this conference would not reflect the opinions of the revolutionaries, they decided to send a delegation to it anyway, consisting of Aleksandr Shliapnikov, David Riazanov and Kozin. The delegation was instructed to get acquainted with any left trade unionists present and in this way to make contacts in Western Europe. But these high hopes could not be realised. The journey to Berne did not take place, owing to 'errors' (mentioned in the VTsSPS report for the year 1919 without any elaboration) and 'the danger that the delegates might be seized by agents of the Entente while travelling'.⁴⁹ The Russians' failure to attend the Berne Conference meant that they missed the opportunity of belonging to the group that re-established the IFTU. The opportunity was there, because they could hardly have been prevented from participating, given the international radicalisation of the workers' movement. This can be seen from the internal discussions among those who restored the IFTU over whether the Russian should be invited or not. Even people who utterly detested Bolshevism (and that means the overwhelming majority of the Western European trade-union leaders – people like Legien, Jouhaux, Appleton and Oudegeest) would not have been able to prevent their participation.

48 *Vtoroi S'ezd* 1921, p. 43. This was part of the resolution introduced by the Communists. The Social Democrats-Internationalists (Lozovsky's party) presented their own resolution, in which the lack of activity in international affairs by the VTsSPS was criticised. But the resolution did not contain any concrete proposals. Cf. *Vtoroi S'ezd* 1921, pp. 38–9.

49 *Otchet Vserossiiskogo Tsentral'nogo Soveta* 1920, pp. 56–7. There is a negative commentary on the result of the Berne conference from the Russian point of view in A. Lozovsky 'Bernskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов', *Professional'noe Dvizhenie*, no. 1, 10 March 1919.

With this, the VTsSPS was again thrown back on the policy of appeal by radio message. As it says in its 1919 report, it took 'every opportunity' to 'remind the Western European revolutionary proletariat of the need for links between the Russian trade-union movement and the movements of Europe and America'.⁵⁰

At the beginning of July, when news first came in about the action of the British trade unions against Lloyd George's intervention in the Russian Civil War, the presidium of the VTsSPS sent them a message of congratulations, in which it also called on them to engage in joint international action. A later appeal to all the workers of the Entente countries similarly asked for their support and assistance.⁵¹

But all these endeavours by the Bolsheviks received a severe blow at the end of July and the beginning of August with the re-establishment of the IFTU in Amsterdam. Trade-union federations which a year before had confronted each other in hostility as wartime opponents now joined together, without including the Bolsheviks. And two months later, at the International Labour Conference in Washington (29 October to 29 November 1919), the insertion of the IFTU into the postwar Versailles system was completed by the announcement that the programme of labour protection demanded by the reformists was to be implemented.

The Bolsheviks opposed a determined resistance to these developments. Tomsky, writing in the organ of the Russian trade unions, made a fierce attack on the Amsterdam 'comedy' as early as the middle of August. Until a moment ago, he wrote, the two sides in the First World War had been striving to outdo each other in chauvinistic attacks, now they were making peace. He referred particularly to the way the ADGB had been forced to ask for forgiveness for its behaviour during the war. The only purpose of the League of Nations, he added, was to support the war being waged by Kolchak, Denikin and Yudenich on the Soviet republic.⁵²

The Bolshevik leaders of the Russian trade unions were now compelled to recognise that a powerful competitor for the allegiance of the workers' movement, firmly united with Social Democracy, had emerged in the shape

50 *Otchet Vserossiiskogo Tsentral'nogo Soveta* 1920, p. 57.

51 Ibid.; *Professional'noe dvizhenie*, no. 19, 11 July 1919. This appeal was given international publicity, and it is included in the KPD's *Kommunistische Räte-Korrespondenz* (no. 13, 15 August 1919) and in the PSI's *Avanti* (no. 242, 1 September 1919).

52 M. Tomsky, 'Amsterdamskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов', in *Professional'noe Dvizhenie*, no. 24, 15 August 1919, reprinted in Tomsky 1928, vol. 6, pp. 14–18. It is not clear from this article whether the Russians had also received an invitation to Amsterdam, which was in fact decided after the Berne Conference.

of the International Federation of Trade Unions. Their hopes that the Western European trade unions could be reorganised with their participation were shattered. Their reaction to this was to abandon their attempt to win influence over the international trade-union movement without challenging its unity.⁵³

But if the Bolsheviks seriously wanted to confront Amsterdam's offensive, they would themselves have to seize the initiative. The CC of the Bolshevik Party gave the starting signal for this change of approach at its 26 September 1919 session. Bukharin and Zinoviev were commissioned to work out and lay before the Politbureau a draft declaration by the Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS). The trade unions of the whole world were to be called upon to break with the 'yellow' Amsterdam International and join the Third International. They were to propose concrete organisational steps to achieve this.⁵⁴ The very next day, the Comintern's leading body, the Bureau of the ECCI,⁵⁵ reiterated this point and resolved on its part to summon 'an international congress of trade unions in the name of the Third International and in close contact with the VTsSPS'.⁵⁶

The possibility of sending a delegation from the Russian trade unions abroad was discussed at the end of September in the bureau of the Bolshevik fraction in the Central Council and at the beginning of October in a sitting of the Bolshevik fraction which was expanded to include the chairmen of the individual trade unions. Shliapnikov pushed for this to be done, also suggesting that the ECCI Bureau should invite the VTsSPS to join the Third International in a consultative capacity, but Riazanov warned that it would not be possible to take this step, in view of the overall situation. This meeting of trade unionists therefore decided simply to discuss the question further with the Bolshevik CC and the Comintern leadership.⁵⁷

53 This abandonment of the line followed until then, as a result of the Amsterdam and Washington decisions, was underlined by Tomskey in the speeches he gave in the summer and autumn of 1920 on international tactics, already referred to in footnote 30. He produced a further argument in favour of the change at the Third Trade Union Congress, early in 1920: the split in the International and the formation of communist parties had also had an impact on the trade unions. Trade unions were now being formed which stood on the platform of the Third International, founded in March 1919 (*Tretii s'ezd* 1921, p. 34).

54 RGASPI 17/2/24/1.

55 Although the abbreviation 'ECCI' for the Executive Committee of the Communist International did not come into general use until later on, we use it here for the sake of simplicity. The Bureau of the ECCI was later renamed the Presidium of the ECCI.

56 Quoted in Kuz'ko 1971, p. 6.

57 RGASPI, 95/1/1.

The only concrete result of all these deliberations was the proclamation of 17 October attacking the Washington Conference, which was composed by Lozovsky and addressed to 'all the workers of Europe and America'. Its conclusion ran as follows: the Russian trade unions were in a position to assert, on the basis of their fighting experience, that there had never been, and never could be, a middle course between 'imperialism and socialism, the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the League of Nations and the Third International'. Accompanying this appeal to the workers was an invitation to all trade unions which stood for the dictatorship of the proletariat to get in touch with the VTsSPS so that a genuinely international conference of revolutionary trade unions could be arranged.⁵⁸

Though this proclamation did not contain a direct invitation to the trade unions to join the Third International, it did at least draw an explicit political dividing-line. Its logical consequence was the call for an organisational break with Amsterdam. This, seen as an answer to the way the IFTU had become tied in to the 'Versailles system', was the first step on the road which would lead within a couple of years to the foundation of the RILU. But the 17 October proclamation was initially unsuccessful, just like the earlier ones. The Central Council reported six months later to the Third Russian Trade Union Congress that no replies had been received.⁵⁹ The degree to which the Russian trade-union movement was still cut off from the international scene in 1919 can be deduced from the statistical information presented in the above-mentioned report from the Central Council. According to the report, only 13 of the 707 discussions at the 103 sittings of the VTsSPS Presidium involved international themes.⁶⁰ The individual Russian trade unions were unable in their supplementary reports to mention any international contacts.⁶¹

There was, however, an increase in the number of Western trade-union organisations which made declarations of sympathy for the Bolshevik revolution (and this naturally went hand in hand with the construction of communist parties, in which trade unionists participated). As early as April 1919, for example, at a congress of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions, a number of delegates – future participants in the founding of the Swiss Communist Party –

58 'Ko vsem rabochim Evropy i Ameriki', in *Professional'nyi Vestnik*, no. 33, 17 October 1919; also in Lozovsky 1930, pp. 23–7. This was already a clear indication that Lozovsky had now moved over to the Bolshevik position.

59 *Otchet Vserossiiskogo* 1920, p. 58.

60 *Otchet Vserossiiskogo* 1920, p. 10.

61 *Otchet Vserossiiskogo* 1920, pp. 179–392.

had pointed out that support for the Russian Revolution implied that it was senseless to restore the IFTU, if this was a purely reformist organisation devoted to class collaboration.⁶² Still more significant was the declaration of solidarity adopted by the biggest Western European trade union, the German Union of Metalworkers [*Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband*, DMV], at its October 1919 congress.⁶³ This stated:

The congress of German metalworkers assembled in Stuttgart, which represents one and a half million German workers, offers its Russian comrades fraternal greetings and heartfelt sympathy in this grave hour. To the French, American, Italian and English workers, whose actions compelled the Entente to give up direct military intervention in Russia, the congress directs an urgent appeal to redouble their efforts today, so as to force the ending of the economic blockade against Russia. The congress will make it its duty to work with all its strength to bring about the cessation of any further recruitment of mercenaries for use against Russia, and to make sure that Germany does not participate in the blockade.

The German government, the metalworkers added, should immediately establish diplomatic and trade relations with the Soviet republic.⁶⁴

The attitude of the revolutionary Syndicalists was still clearer. They did not limit themselves to declarations of sympathy for the Bolsheviks. In the course of 1919, important Syndicalist trade unions such as the CNT and the USI announced that they would join the Third International. We shall look at this in more detail later on.

In view of the great enthusiasm there was among trade unionists for the Russian Revolution, the IFTU in its turn was forced to react. At the end of 1919, its secretary Edo Fimmen sent a letter to the Russian trade unions, in which he declared that the IFTU had spoken out emphatically against the blockade of Soviet Russia and wished to support the Russian trade-union movement. He was now turning to them, he said, 'to ask them urgently and as soon as pos-

62 *Protokoll des Ausserordentlichen Schweizerischen Gewerkschaftskongresses* 1919, for example, pp. 53–6.

63 The Majority Social Democratic leadership of the union was overthrown at this congress, and a new leadership dominated by the USPD and headed by Robert Dißmann took over, although this leadership was in turn to break apart in the following year, in the context of the split in the USPD. On this, see Wentzel 1981, pp. 37–42. An analysis of this congress from the Bolshevik angle was given by Fritz Platten (Platten 1920).

64 *Die vierzehnte ordentliche Generalversammlung* 1919, p. 310.

sible to send to his office all appropriate information about the structure, the development and the struggles of the Russian trade unions, as well as about the successes achieved by their endeavours'. 'I am confident', he added, 'that you will fulfil my request and that in this way the first step can be taken towards international cooperation between the Russian workers and their comrades in other countries'.⁶⁵ There was no sign of political solidarity or indeed sympathy in this highly formal letter; it does not even mention the Russian Revolution as such. It simply marked a recognition that the Russian trade-union movement was a valid interlocutor, 'by virtue of its office'. The Russian trade unions therefore acted appropriately when they simply 'took note' of the declaration.⁶⁶

Whether the IFTU really made intensive efforts to get in contact with the Russian trade unions at this time is difficult to say, as statements made about this are rather imprecise. According to Fimmen, at the London Congress of IFTU, held in November 1920:

We attempted to get in contact with the Russian trade unions immediately after the foundation of the IFTU. We telegraphed and wrote, declared our solidarity with them, asked them to get in contact with us and invited them ... to enter our organisation. We repeated this invitation more than once. We did not receive a direct answer ... but what we did receive, through the medium of the press and public declarations, were all the curses and slanders, all the nonsense ... that the Russian trade union movement brought forward against our International.⁶⁷

Two years later, however, he was less emphatic: 'The IFTU has never excluded the Russian trade unions from its ranks. Immediately after the Amsterdam Congress, the Bureau approached the trade unions in Petersburg, Moscow and Odessa requesting them to take up relations with us again'.⁶⁸

At its April 1920 meeting, the IFTU executive finally decided to take part in a mission of investigation which the International Labour Organisation –

65 The letter was printed in Germany in the ADGB organ *Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 1, 3 January 1920, and in Russia in the new organ of the VTsSPS, *Professional'noe dvizhenie*, nos. 8–9, 27 February 1920.

66 This happened in the 19 February 1920 session of the Bureau of the Bolshevik fraction in the VTsSPS, after Lozovsky had told the meeting that he had been informed of the letter by the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. (RGASPI, 95/5/7).

67 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1921*, p. 21.

68 Fimmen 1922, p. 12.

an organisation which was part of the League of Nations, a body emphatically rejected by the Bolsheviks – planned to send to Russia (although this did not actually come to anything).⁶⁹

It slowly became apparent in Russia that, since the rule of the Bolsheviks had now become more firmly established, the connection with the West could be taken up again, with the first step being the direct exchange of information. From December onwards, the Central Council's organ, *Professional'noe Dvizhenie* [The Trade Union Movement], included a page of information edited by Lozovsky, which appeared more or less regularly under the title *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie* [The International Workers' Movement]. There were more invitations to trade unionists abroad to take part in Russian trade-union congresses or at least to visit Russia.⁷⁰ Once again there was no response, at least for the moment,⁷¹ but it was likely, in view of the situation, that contact would soon be made with the Western trade-union movement. The Russian trade unions therefore finally had to define what their concrete political tactics would be towards the restored IFTU.

The Bolsheviks had exerted firm control over the Russian trade unions since 1918. They had already founded the Communist International, a step whose

69 *Die Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January 1921, p. 8. The mission to Russia had already been suggested by trade-union leaders, such as Jouhaux, to the International Labour Office (which was a part of the International Labour Organisation). There was also a rival plan with a similar aim by the League of Nations itself. Both ideas failed because they came up against the fundamentally negative attitude of the Bolsheviks. See Alcock 1971, pp. 58–60.

70 For example, the Russian metalworkers' union called on foreign metalworkers' organisations to take part in their February 1920 congress (see *Metallarbeiter-Zeitung*, no. 2, 24 January 1920). On 27 January, the presidium of the VTsSPS approached the 'trade-union organised proletariat of Europe and America' with an invitation to its third congress (*Professional'noe Dvizhenie*, no. 5, 30 January 1920). See also the correspondence between the German and Russian Building Workers' Trade Unions in the first few months of 1920, printed in *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, nos. 1–2, May 1920. The increasingly porous character of the blockade of Russia induced the Swiss trade-union federation to respond finally to the invitation made earlier. In February 1920, it decided to approach the Russian legation in Stockholm. The legation transmitted the Swiss request to Shliapnikov, who was in Norway in the spring of 1920. But the matter went no further. (See *Bericht des Bundeskomitees* 1920, p. 72).

71 Difficulties of communication naturally also had a part to play in this failure. For example, the Swedish trade unions received their invitation to the Russian congress a week after it had taken place, so they could not respond for purely technical reasons. (See Loit 1991, p. 298).

necessity they had insisted on since the beginning of the First World War, in view of the bankruptcy of the Second International. This new, third, international was intended to overcome the separation between economic and political struggles which had been a feature of the Second International by engaging in a unified revolutionary class struggle. Would it therefore need to comprise both parties and trade unions, as had been the custom in the time of the First International, whereas the trade unions had been increasingly placed in the background under the Second International, as parliamentary activities took on an ever more important role? In late 1919 and early 1920, the Bolshevik leaders, and in particular the chairman of the Comintern, Zinoviev, took steps to propagate the idea that the trade unions should also join the Third International.

Lozovsky formulated the same idea in March 1920 in his theses on the 'International Trade Union Movement and our Tasks'. He wrote that, leaving aside the international associations of particular trades (the International Trade Secretariats), for the VTsSPS to set up its own Trade Union International would only be 'playing into the hands of the bankrupt trade unionists of the Second International'. The trade unions must take part in the Comintern on an equal footing with the political organisations of the working class, and they should establish, within the Comintern framework, an 'international secretariat, or trade union section'.⁷²

The third congress of the Russian trade unions (6–13 April 1920) confirmed this position. In a message of greeting read on his behalf (he was ill at the time), the Comintern's chairman, Zinoviev, recalled the example of the First International and expressed the hope that 'the proletarian trade unions of the whole world will take part in the next Comintern congress, and will form in this way a part (a section) of the Communist International'.⁷³ Radek, in his report on the international situation, went into more detail on this question, sketching a whole panorama of class struggles in Europe since the end of the world war.⁷⁴ He pointed to the tremendous upsurge that had taken place in the trade-union movement, noting however that it was not yet revolutionary in character, and he called on communists to participate actively in it, perhaps through the medium of factory committees, instead of attempting to set up

72 Lozovsky, 'Mezhdunarodnoe professional'noe dvizhenie i nashi zadachi', *Professional'noe Dvizhenie*, nos. 11–12, 19 March 1920.

73 *Tretii Vserossiiskii S'ezd* 1921, p. 14. See Garvi 1981, pp. 78–85, on the Third Trade Union Congress.

74 *Tretii Vserossiiskii S'ezd* 1921, pp. 135–40.

new revolutionary trade unions. He expressed himself optimistically on the possibility available to the Russian trade unions, now that the Civil War had come to an end, of 'opening a window to Europe for Soviet Russia'. Shliapnikov would soon be sent abroad to make the necessary contacts. Now there was a Third International, he added. Previously there were two internationals, a trade union one and a political one. 'Now there is a united struggle for the improvement of the situation of the working class and the overthrow of capitalism. Only the Third, Communist International is possible at the present moment. It is inevitable that it be connected with the trade unions, which are pursuing the revolutionary road'. Martov, speaking for the Menshevik fraction, strongly objected to entry into the Third International, pointing out that the IFTU, which had itself approached the Russian trade unions very recently, represented 15 million workers, even if it was led by right-wing socialists. Radek himself, he added, had warned against setting up new trade unions in the West at the national level. The proposal to enter the Third International represented a sectarian policy, in his view.⁷⁵ As was to be expected, however, the resolution introduced by the communists, calling for entry into the Third International and the summoning of an international trade-union congress by the VTsSPS and the ECCI, was adopted by a large majority.⁷⁶

It sounded like a reply to Martov's objections when, at the end of April, Lozovsky reverted to the decision of the Third Trade Union Congress on international perspectives, in the context of a lengthy pamphlet presenting the Russian trade unions to the outside world. Referring to the International Labour Organisation, which had just been set up, he asserted that the IFTU was 'a decaying corpse' for which the Russian trade unions could only feel 'scorn'. Its opponent was the Third International, which stood for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and of which the Russian trade unions now formed a part. He added quite explicitly: 'We would be committing the greatest of sins if we wanted to create a special trade-union international of our own. In the best case, it would mean a fragmentation of our forces; and in the worst case it would be a disastrous repetition of the Second International, in the manner of the IFTU. All revolutionary class trade unions should join the Third International, within which they should form a trade union section or secretariat'.⁷⁷

75 *Tretii Vserossiiskii S'ezd* 1921, pp. 142–3.

76 *Tretii Vserossiiskii S'ezd* 1921, pp. 76 and 145.

77 A. Losowski 1920, *Die Gewerkschaften in Sowjetrussland*, pp. 98–125. This pamphlet was originally written by Lozovsky as the introduction to a collective work providing material on the Russian trade unions, intended for the information of a British workers' delegation

With this, the Bolshevik trade-union leadership in Russia had established a clear political line. Whether this could actually be put into practice would be revealed when they had managed to make contact with the trade unions of the West. International questions now began to occupy a prominent place on the agenda of the sessions of the VTsSPS's presidium. On 3 May, there was a thorough discussion on the tactics to be adopted towards the international trade-union movement, and it was agreed that this question must be clarified with the Comintern leadership. Lozovsky and Mel'nichansky were instructed to make contact with Zinoviev for this purpose. On 24 May, it was decided to establish an international section under Lozovsky's direction. At the same time, he was delegated to the ECCI Bureau as representative of the VTsSPS, in an advisory capacity.⁷⁸ In May 1920, the information supplement to the VTsSPS organ, mentioned earlier, devoted to the international trade-union movement, was upgraded to become a separate journal, edited by Lozovsky, under the same title, *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie* [International Workers' Movement].⁷⁹

The first discussion partners the Bolsheviks found in the West were the newly restored International Trade Secretariats (ITSS). They had not yet arrived at a firm view about these bodies, but in any case they were not rejected in principle, as the IFTU had been. In March 1920, the International Transport Workers' Federation held its first postwar congress, in Christiania (Oslo). At the

expected to arrive in May 1920. It was then translated into a number of languages and published as a pamphlet. Lozovsky used similar arguments in his speech at the reception for the British delegation. ('Privetstvie pervym angliiskim delegatam' [Rech' na plenum Petrogradskogo Soveta Profsoiuzov, 1920], in Lozovsky 1930, pp. 32–9). Almost at the same time, Shliapnikov, who was in Western Europe, produced an information brochure on the Russian trade unions, presenting the same analysis as Lozovsky, but formulating it in a much more 'academic' way. Thus he did not write directly of entry into the Comintern, but only of the need to abolish the division between political and trade-union internationals and create a unified centre for the international revolutionary class struggle; but the one logically followed from the other. (Schlapnikoff 1920; Schlapnikow 1920).

78 *Otchet VTsSPS* 1921, p. 198.

79 It was supposed to appear every fortnight, but in fact only three double issues came out (nos. 1–2 in May, 3–4 in June, and 5–6 in August). The journal contained a series of programmatic positions and commentaries on the international trade-union movement, as well as numerous documents, announcements, short reports and informational articles. After the August issue, the journal temporarily ceased publication, because Lozovsky was on his way to Germany with a VTsSPS delegation. At the end of 1920, however, it started to come out again as the organ of the newly founded International Trade Union Council. Its name remained the same, but it now appeared simultaneously in four languages.

same time, the organisations of metalworkers in Western Europe were making intensive efforts to resuscitate the International Metal Workers' Federation. Delegations headed by Shliapnikov were sent to both these organisations, as Radek had already envisaged at the Third Trade Union Congress. But for various reasons these endeavours were not crowned with immediate success (see section 4 of this chapter).

Instead, a couple of workers' delegations arrived in Soviet Russia. A British delegation came in May 1920, followed by a delegation of Italian trade unionists in June. In each case, the delegations included representatives of political parties and other organisations. As a result of discussions with them, and the genuine contacts now made with representatives of Western trade unions with mass influence, all the plans previously put forward, the whole of the previously agreed Bolshevik line, became null and void. The international activity of the Russian trade unions now took on a different direction.

2 The Communist International and the Trade-Union Question⁸⁰

Disputes about the position of the trade unions did not originally have any great significance for the Bolsheviks. As Marxists they considered trade unions to be necessary and they took part in them as soon as the political situation allowed their establishment, which happened after the 1905 revolution. Their advocacy within the RSDWP of strict subordination of trade unions to the party was a position in which other 'orthodox' tendencies in the Second International entirely agreed with them. They were also entirely in line with the leading interpreters of Marxism in international Social Democracy, namely the German and Austrian party theorists, in their strict rejection of revolutionary Syndicalism, although the 'ultra-left' Bolsheviks around Bogdanov, the *Vpered* group, did tend to flirt with syndicalist ideas.⁸¹ In a report sent to the Second International just before the outbreak of the First World War, Lenin boasted that in view of the fragmentation of Russian Social Democracy, his supporters continued to hold fast to the unity of the trade unions, defending them against attempts to found 'parallel trade unions'.⁸² The Bolsheviks built on this the-

80 This subject is treated briefly in the following accounts: Resis 1963, pp. 237–52; Resis 1964, pp. 13–38; Kochanski 1971, pp. 115–34; Groppo 1982, pp. 5–45; Groppo 1991, pp. 53–98.

81 On this point, see Williams 1986, pp. 81–104; and Scherer 1985, pp. 371–94.

82 See his 'Report of the CC of the RSDLP to the Brussels Conference and Instructions to the CC Delegates', in Lenin 1964, vol. 20, p. 508.

oretical basis when, after their conquest of the Soviets, which was followed by the revolutionary seizure of power in October, they took over the leadership of the Russian trade unions at the latter's first congress, held in January 1918.

But how did the trade union question look from an international perspective? After the evident failure of the Second International in August 1914, the Bolsheviks had proclaimed the bankruptcy of Social Democracy and the need to create communist parties and a new, communist, International. Did that mean that the trade unions should also be split everywhere? This did not correspond to the traditions of Bolshevism in Russia, but it did reflect the predominant mood in the communist groups outside Russia, which were still small at the end of 1918. For the trade unions, by the very nature of their activity, undoubtedly tended towards reformism. In addition, the trade-union leaders had in many cases played a decisive role in 1914 in pushing the Social Democratic parties along the path of support for the war.

The speeches at the founding congress of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), which met from 30 December 1918 to 1 January 1919, provide an exemplary articulation of the views of broad sections of the infant communist movement. A number of delegates emphatically put forward the view that the trade unions and particularly their full-time officials were hand in glove with capitalism. The people who took this line often took part later on in the 'Unions' and other syndicalist organisations in Germany. Demands were made for a 'unity organisation' which would be both a trade union and a political party. There were also demands for another variant, in which local trade unions would be formed under the control of the party. Delegates who took these views also proposed that communists immediately leave the existing trade unions. One speaker criticised members of the Spartacus League who had made polemical attacks on this idea. Only a few delegates, who did after all represent the more experienced section of the party congress, could look back on a long period of political work, and were above all to be found in the core leadership of the Spartacus League, were able to hold their ground against the Syndicalist view. Fritz Heckert, who, as the representative of the Chemnitz branch of the Union of Building Workers, was himself a trade-union official, explicitly said he would 'stand up for the trade union movement' despite the 'counter-revolutionary tendencies' that dominated it, and he warned against the desire to 'cast everything aside with a wave of the hand'. Rosa Luxemburg's attitude was less clear-cut: she made a strong and polemical attack on the proposal to set up 'unity organisations', but she also placed great emphasis on the role of the Workers' Councils as economic organs. Having already been defeated on the question of participation in elections, the Spartacus leadership would cer-

tainly have suffered a second disaster if the matter had gone to a vote, but this was avoided by one of the two party chairmen, Wilhelm Pieck, who made the adroit proposal to leave the decision to a committee appointed by the Party Congress to deal with programmatic and organisational questions.⁸³

A few months later, in March 1919, at a congress held in Moscow, the new Communist International was founded. Even though communist parties existed as yet in very few countries, this decision expressed an international tendency which led in the course of the next two years to the creation of mass communist parties.⁸⁴ There was no uniform position on the trade unions at this founding congress. The opinions articulated on the subject were strongly influenced by the specific national experiences of the speakers, and it was to some extent a dialogue of the deaf, owing to the varying theoretical traditions they represented. The discussions were very much concerned with the world revolution which appeared to be on the horizon; hence questions like the role of 'Soviets' or 'Councils' or the antagonism between 'bourgeois democracy' and 'proletarian dictatorship' were at the centre of attention, whereas the trade unions were only mentioned in passing.

The representative of the KPD, Hugo Eberlein, said in his report that in Germany the trade unions were 'in league with the yellow unions' and the factory councils had 'completely eclipsed them'. The Finn Kuusinen spoke in similar vein, saying that there had been no revolutionary trade unions involved in the defeated Finnish revolution of the previous year, and that he doubted whether revolutionary trade unions could possibly exist in Finland: 'The structure of trade unions and cooperatives there convinces us that after the revolution the new social order could be better established without these unions than with

83 The discussion on the point of the agenda headed 'Economic Struggles' is printed in *Die Gründung der KPD* 1993, pp. 137–67. The report on this question was delivered by Paul Lange, who was also a full-time trade-union official (with the Commercial Employees' Union). He and Heckert were the only trade-union officials among the delegates. The organ of the General Commission then used this party discussion as the occasion for a fierce attack on the KPD, against the background of the January 1919 disturbances ('Die Niederlage des Spartakismus', *Correspondenzblatt*, 18 January 1919). On the trade-union discussion at the KPD's founding congress, see Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 48–53.

84 On the founding of the Comintern, see Hulse 1964, particularly pp. 1–35; Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, particularly pp. 50–88; *Pervyi Kongress Komintern* 1986; and Broué 1997, pp. 76–87. The minutes of the 1919 congress were published in German in a contemporary edition (*Der I. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921). There is a critical edition in English, with annotations, by John Riddell (*Founding the Communist International* 1987).

them, even if they were founded on a new basis'. Similar negative evaluations emerged in other reports as well.⁸⁵

Only the United States representative, Boris Reinstein of the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), put forward a different position in principle. In explicit disagreement with the Finns, and with reference to the attempts to reorganise the IFTU, he said:

We are not inclined to ascribe an insignificant or subordinate role to the trade union movement. Our successes in the most highly developed capitalist country, the United States, teach us something else ... Thus our position is that the Third International should more sharply stress the need for revolutionising and transforming the trade union movement. Our experience leads us to conclude that those who carry the banner under which the masses of organised workers march, such union leaders as Gompers in America, Carl Legien in Germany, and Henderson in England, actually hold the key to the overall situation ... The problem is to liberate the trade union movement from the disastrous influence of these capitalist flunkies.

Consistently with this position, Reinstein proposed an amendment to the programmatic guidelines of the Communist International, calling on communists to 'work ... to set the trade union movements of their countries on a truly revolutionary course'. This proposal was not discussed any further, however, but referred to the bureau of the new International for further examination.⁸⁶

With his intervention, Reinstein had pointed in principle to the significance of the trade unions, thereby dissociating himself from the other opinions advanced at the First Congress. But he had not indicated what that meant concretely for activities in particular countries, and in view of the traditions of his party it is doubtful whether he had in mind the communist 'fraction and cell tactics' later adopted by the Comintern for the existing reformist mass trade unions. For in the United States, the SLP had attempted to form its own socialist industrial trade unions in open opposition to the AFL. It initially acted within the framework of the IWW, but then, after 1908, when 'anti-party' tendencies, under Syndicalist influence, gained the upper hand in that organisation, outside it, by creating its own trade-union centre, the 'Detroit IWW'. This

85 *Der 1. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921, pp. 15, 20–1, 70–1, 97 [*Founding the Communist International* 1987, pp. 56, 60–1, 74, 132].

86 *Der 1. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921, pp. 106–8, 113, 131, 192–3 [*Founding the Communist International* 1987, pp. 140–1, 146, 165, 248].

was renamed the Workers' International Industrial Union (WIIU) in 1914, but it remained fairly insignificant. (According to the main SLP theorist, Daniel De Leon, industrial trade unions ought to form the basis of socialist society. He had developed this conception before the 'discovery' of the Workers' Councils).⁸⁷ Reinstein had at least pointed to a problem grandly ignored by almost all the other delegates at the First Congress because of their expectations of an immediate revolution.

Curiously, the Bolshevik representatives adopted a very reserved attitude on the trade-union question. It is true that Zinoviev pointed to the important role now played by the trade unions as a part of the Soviet state. But both he and Bukharin emphasised the specificity of the Russian situation, in which the leadership of the trade unions lay in the hands of the Bolshevik Party. In countries where the trade unions had pursued a different course of development, the nature of the problems to be solved would also be different.⁸⁸ The impending worldwide victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat appeared to make any discussion with the trade unions, under their reformist leadership, an irrelevance. This viewpoint was plainly apparent in the Manifesto of the Communist International, written by Trotsky and adopted by the First Congress, which contraposed the new and all-embracing Soviet system to the inadequacies of the 'old parties' and the 'old trade unions'.⁸⁹

87 The policy and programme of this current of opinion in the American left has been analysed by Stephen Coleman (1990), with some reference to Lenin's relation to De Leon, and by Girard and Perry (1993). Ironically, the SLP finally decided not to enter the Comintern, despite its initially sympathetic attitude. As a result, a large section of its trade union, the WIIU, split off and joined the Communist Party of the USA, which had emerged from the Socialist Party. The SLP reacted to this by dissolving the WIIU completely. After 1918, the SLP made an attempt to set up 'socialist industrial unions' in Germany by sending an emissary to that country. This led to the temporary formation of an insignificant local sect in Brunswick, which disappeared from the scene after the SLP's representative returned to the United States. See Bock 1993, pp. 211–14. See also the collective volume of contributions published by the SLP emissary himself, Karl Dannenberg, which contains, among other things, some fierce attacks on the trade-union tactics employed by the communists (Dannenberg 1921).

88 *Der 1. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921, pp. 24–5 and 92–3 [*Founding the Communist International* 1987, pp. 64 and 128–9]. There were certainly voices raised on the Bolshevik side in favour of the abolition of the trade unions, against the background of their 'governmentalisation' (or 'statification') under War Communism. This step was decisively rejected by Zinoviev, but it did actually happen in 1919 in the short-lived Latvian Soviet Republic. See Schwarz 1919 pp. 47–8.

89 The Manifesto is printed in *Der 1. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921, pp.

In view of the wide variation in positions on, and evaluations of, the international situation, it is not surprising that Hugo Eberlein had to note in his report for the Commission on the Platform of the new International that although they had spent a long time on the trade-union question and questioned the representatives of the individual countries in detail on it, there was 'no one solution of this problem that we could present as a single, overall policy towards the trade unions'. After briefly describing the trade-union question in the most important countries, he therefore drew this conclusion: 'We must leave it up to each national organisation to develop a position on it'.⁹⁰

Thus for the moment everything remained open. The First Congress did however also touch on a further matter, which was to have important consequences when the RILU came to be set up. This was the possible alliance with the Syndicalists, which we shall deal with in the next section of this chapter.

The 'indifference'⁹¹ of the Bolsheviks to the trade-union question resulted from their expectation that the world revolution was advancing towards victory. This view turned out to be far too optimistic. But, as Lazitch and Drachkovitch have written, 'Lenin and his colleagues seldom jumped so quickly from one extreme to the other in their evaluation of events as they did in 1919'.⁹² The Soviet republics in Hungary, Slovakia and Bavaria all collapsed in the summer of 1919, while the advance of the White Guards into Russia became ever more threatening. At the same time, the Second International was reorganised, and, in close association with it, the IFTU as well. Moreover, its member organisations were expanding very rapidly at this time.

Lenin now took the lead in issuing an emphatic warning against underestimating the difficulty of creating a communist mass movement in the West, and in this context he pointed out the need to increase their influence in the trade unions, against the background of Russian experience. Thus he wrote in the August issue of the new, eponymous journal of the Communist International, in the course of a long polemic against Ramsay MacDonald, the leader of the

171–82, here p. 178. [*Founding the Communist International* 1987, pp. 222–32, here p. 229]. For the Bolsheviks, the most important document of the Congress would probably have been Lenin's 'Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat' (*Der 1. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921, pp. 115–25 [*Founding the Communist International* 1987, pp. 149–59]).

90 *Der 1. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1921, p. 111 [*Founding the Communist International* 1987, pp. 144–5].

91 See Resis 1963, p. 239.

92 Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, p. 164.

British ILP, that the Second International had performed an undeniable historical service in its time, with its 'creation of mass working-class organisations', namely 'cooperative, *trade union* and political' organisations.⁹³ In his 'Greetings to Italian, French and German communists', written in October, he refers explicitly to Russian experience: 'We worked in the ultra-reactionary, purely Menshevik, trade unions, which (in their counter-revolutionary nature) yield nothing to the Legien unions – the foulest and most reactionary trade unions in Germany ... At one time we were in a minority in the Soviets, the trade unions and the cooperatives. By persistent effort and long struggle ... we won a majority in *all* workers' organisations'. The conclusion he drew from this was that: 'It is necessary to work for the party's participation in bourgeois parliaments, in reactionary trade unions and in factory councils that have been mutilated and castrated in Scheidemann fashion, for the party to be wherever workers are to be found, wherever it is possible to talk to workers, to influence the working masses'.⁹⁴

The leadership of the Comintern now acted along these lines. In a circular of 1 September, signed by Zinoviev, the groups in the West which adhered to communism were advised that 'tactical unity' was needed to overcome their highly heterogeneous nature, itself a result of their differences of origin, some having come from anti-parliamentary Syndicalist groupings, others from the left of Social Democracy: 'The main endeavours of comrades should be in the direction of mobilising the masses: founding the party, forming their own groups in the trade unions and conquering them, and organising Soviets in the course of the struggle'.⁹⁵

Zinoviev therefore took care not to allow any more misunderstandings to arise out of communist attacks on the political attitude of the reformist trade unions. When, for example, the representative of the Hungarian communists in Moscow, Endre Rudnyánszky, writing in an article in the organ of the Comintern, attacked the Hungarian trade unions, which were a bastion of the right-

93 'Die Aufgaben der III.Internationale', in *Kommunistische Internationale*, nos. 4/5, 1919, pp. 52–66, my italics. [The English version is 'The Tasks of the Third International', in Lenin 1965, *Collected Works*, vol. 29, pp. 494–512, here p. 504].

94 Lenin 1965, *Collected Works*, vol. 30, pp. 52–62, here pp. 58 and 61.

95 'Rundschreiben des Exekutiv-Komitees der Kommunistischen Internationale' [Circular from the Executive Committee of the Communist International], *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 3, 1919, pp. 71–4, here pp. 71 and 74. It is true that this circular was mainly concerned with parliamentary elections, but in communist discussions this problem was always seen in close connection with the trade-union question, since both issues formed part of the disagreements of principle they had with the 'left radical' position.

wing Social Democrats, for their attitude during the short-lived Soviet republic and their role in its downfall, Zinoviev was quick to add a signed editorial note, to this effect:

In publishing the article of Comrade Rudnyánszky the editorial board notes that the counter-revolutionary role played by the Hungarian Menshevik trade unions in the Hungarian Menshevik Black Hundred coup by no means signifies that trade unions in general are unnecessary. The developing proletarian revolution splits the present 'unified' trade unions, transforms the trade union movement, breathes into it the spirit of the proletarian struggle, and makes it into one of the strongholds of the proletarian dictatorship. The workers' revolution sets up the red trade union international in confrontation with the yellow trade union international. The Executive Committee of the Comintern (ECCI) will devote a special circular to this question in the near future.⁹⁶

It is significant, incidentally, that this article, along with Zinoviev's editorial note, was not included in the German-language editions, which were very late in appearing, owing to the great difficulties experienced in finding both material resources and appropriate translators.⁹⁷ It would not be wrong to assume that the Bolsheviks did not want to place any obstacles in the way of communist fractional work in the trade unions of the West by fierce polemics of this kind, which could easily be utilised by left radical forces, which were opposed in principle to trade-union work.

Indeed, the attitude of the nascent communist parties to the trade-union question had not by any means been settled by these proclamations on the part of the Bolshevik leaders. An example of this is provided by the discussions in the KPD, which were inevitably of decisive significance for the whole Communist International, given the key position of Germany within the capitalist West.⁹⁸

96 Rudnianskii 1919, p. 642.

97 The German-language issues of the Comintern organ, which appeared in Berlin and in Vienna in 1919, also differed among themselves to some extent. They also did not correspond exactly to the Russian edition in content, and they appeared in a different order.

98 The next paragraph is based essentially on Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 67–83. See also Thoms 1970, as well as the discussion in Bock 1993, pp. 122–52, on the crystallisation of an opposition within the party in connection with the trade-union question, among other things.

It is true that external conditions in Germany were not at all conducive to an extensive discussion. A number of the KPD's most important leaders had been murdered, and the government repeatedly took punitive measures against the party during 1919. Nevertheless, the KPD was compelled by the objective situation to take a position on these issues. The party's first *Reichskonferenz* [national conference], held on 29 March 1919, emphatically rejected the call to leave the trade unions.⁹⁹ But this was replaced during the summer by a line approving the splitting of the trade unions. This should not happen in all circumstances, it was said, but only where the mood of the masses appeared to be favourable and revolutionary factory councils were in a position to facilitate the establishment of new industrial unions. In this area at least, the new tactic was to have a very important consequence, with which the KPD and the RILU had to deal repeatedly in subsequent years: the founding of the FAU ['Gelsenkirchen Tendency'] among the miners of the Ruhr. But a further illegal *Reichskonferenz*, held on 14 and 15 June 1919, then drew a firm line against Syndicalism, which was understood to mean three things: a refusal to participate in elections; an insistence on a federal structure for the party; and an inclination towards the creation of 'unity organisations'.¹⁰⁰ Two months later, however, there was another national conference (16 and 17 August) at which the position in favour of splitting the trade unions was reaffirmed.¹⁰¹ Party leaders like Paul Levi and Heinrich Brandler also supported the splitting of the trade unions at the time, although a little later, after the change of line, Brandler was to be particularly identified with the policy of carrying on fractional activities *within* the reformist trade unions.

The above decisions did not remove uncertainties about the party's position. It continued to be deeply divided on the trade-union question. In many places the KPD stood under the influence of radical workers who had become politicised after the revolution of November 1918. A mere nuance seemed to divide the concept of splitting the trade unions from the simple course of withdrawing from them and starting afresh. In many cases one could recognise the idea of the 'unity organisation' demanded by the radical left at the Founding

99 See the bulletin of the KPD *Zentrale* on this point, printed in *Dokumente und Materialien* 1966, pp. 55–7.

100 See the proclamation against Syndicalism in *Dokumente und Materialien* 1966, pp. 105–6.

101 See also the KPD *Zentrale*'s 28 August circular on trade-union tactics, based on the decisions of this conference, which was reprinted and discussed in October in the *Korrespondenzblatt* of the General Commission under the title 'Political Disruption of the Trade Unions', although by that time the KPD had already changed its line on this issue. (*Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 41, 11 October 1919).

Congress of the KPD behind the notion of new, revolutionary factory organisations or industrial unions, which came to be described simply as 'Unions'. At this time there were only a few individual voices to be heard calling for consistent trade-union work. Fritz Heckert, who endeavoured to group together into a communist fraction the few party delegates who appeared at the Tenth German Trade Union Congress (30 June to 5 July 1919), was once again at the forefront of this tendency. For the party as a whole, the predominant attitude continued to be that expressed in a June 1919 pamphlet: 'For now it is a matter of indifference for us whether a communist is organised in a trade union or not. What is important is that the programme and tactics of communism are accepted. We are not concerned about whether someone is organised in a Syndicalist Union or a Free Trade Union'.¹⁰²

Not until the autumn of 1919 did the KPD's party leadership (the *Zentrale*) arrive at a definite view. Two things were decisive in this connection: first the defeats suffered by the revolutionary movement in Germany (which had the result of forcing the Workers' Councils into the background), and second the constant economic struggles and the disputes within the trade unions, in which the USPD led a highly effective opposition. It gained its greatest success by taking over the DMV leadership in October 1919. (At the same time, the KPD and the left wing of the USPD gradually grew closer together). Karl Radek, sent to Germany at the end of 1918 to represent the Bolsheviks, played an important role in forming the views of the KPD party leadership.¹⁰³ Admittedly, he had already been arrested by February 1919, and in January 1920 he was expelled from Germany. But the circumstances of his imprisonment allowed him, at least by mid-1919, to make wide-ranging contact with both the KPD and the emissaries of the Comintern (first Mieczysław Broński, and then after the end of October Iakov Reich, who came directly from Moscow to Berlin and set up the Comintern's West European Secretariat in that city).¹⁰⁴

In his autobiographical notes, written some years later, Radek said this about his contact with the party: 'On the basic question of the relationship with the trade unions, there was a great deal of chaos'.¹⁰⁵ After the party chairman, Paul Levi, had called once again in a letter for withdrawal from

102 Brandt 1919. The author of this pamphlet was possibly Paul Frölich, who issued another pamphlet on the same theme under his own name a few months later, although this contained a much sharper polemic. (Frölich 1919).

103 See Goldbach 1973.

104 On the West European Secretariat of the Comintern, see Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, pp. 164–82, and Conti 1972.

105 Radek 1962, p. 155.

the free trade unions and the creation of new, revolutionary unions, Radek examined the question thoroughly in the middle of September in a pamphlet entitled 'The Development of the German Revolution and the Tasks of the Communist Party'.¹⁰⁶ This was followed in November by a further pamphlet: 'The Development of the World Revolution and the Tactics of the Communist Parties in the Struggle for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'.¹⁰⁷ The main aim of both pamphlets¹⁰⁸ was to warn against leaving out of account the use of a variety of tactics to win over the broad masses. The trade-union question played a prominent role in this. The masses, he said, had flowed into the trade unions because they saw them as an instrument in the economic struggle. The trade-union bureaucracy was reactionary. It was necessary to fight against it, not by leaving the trade-union movement, but by taking part in the struggles that were in progress and transforming the trade unions. Revolutionary impatience was a sign of putschism. Communists would simply isolate themselves by setting up new, revolutionary factory organisations ('Unions'). Everywhere these had been stillborn. He rejected the example of the IWW, which was brought forward again and again in the discussions within the KPD. The situation that prevailed in the United States, namely the isolation of the AFL from the immigrant masses, was not comparable with that in Western Europe.

Largely in response to these arguments, Levi now changed his position on the trade-union question. The KPD leadership had already spoken out emphatically against syndicalism and in favour of participation in elections. Now it also came out in support of work in the existing trade unions. Levi advanced still further in this direction at the Second Party Congress, held between 20 and 24 October 1919, by issuing an ultimatum to the delegates that they agree to the new line.¹⁰⁹ He got rid of the very considerable opposition to this – the voting figures on the 'Declaration of Communist Principles and Tactics' were 31 in favour, 18 against – by sleight-of-hand: it was declared that all those who had voted against the declaration now stood outside the party.¹¹⁰ With this the

106 This was first published in Stuttgart in 1919 under the pseudonym Arnold Struthahn.

107 Berlin 1919.

108 On this, see also Goldbach 1973, pp. 57–8.

109 See *Bericht über den 2. Parteitag*, n.d.; Bock 1993, pp. 141–4; and Goldbach 1973, pp. 52–6.

110 The resolution dealing specifically with the trade unions was adopted after the split had taken place over this general declaration of principles. Not every difference of opinion had yet been removed, however. This is shown by the fact that the resolution on the trade unions was only adopted by 16 to 8 votes, and two speakers from the Ruhr district explicitly reaffirmed their commitment to 'their' Union, to which a member of the *Zentrale* hastened

party leadership had itself made the break with the opposition, even though Radek tried at the last minute to prevent it from happening, an endeavour that would certainly have been approved by the Comintern leaders if they had known what was happening. Radek disagreed less on grounds of principle, for here he was in agreement with Levi, than on a tactical basis. He considered that many of the Left Radicals could still be won over. As it turned out, the split took several months to be completed. Not until the next spring did it lead to the formal establishment of a new party, the *Kommunistische Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands* (KAPD) [Communist Workers' Party of Germany], as well as a separate union, the *Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union* (AAU) [General Workers' Union]. With this, the KPD was faced with a not insignificant rival. The issue of the relationship of the KPD to the KAPD and the AAU would provoke a range of future conflicts.

The KPD's decision had a direct impact on the whole of Western European communism. 'It was the first time', says Goldbach, 'that a decision made in the KPD was regarded as authoritative for the other sections of the Comintern'.¹¹¹ The split does not appear to have sparked off any discussions at a European conference organised by the West European Secretariat in Frankfurt (26–29 November 1919). What was discussed there was more of an informational and organisational nature.¹¹² The new line was given a more authoritative expression in the 'Theses on the Tactics of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Proletarian Dictatorship' presented by the West European Secretariat in January 1920.¹¹³ They were, it is true, still described as a 'draft', but an accompanying article by August Thalheimer in the German edition of the Comintern's journal *Kommunistische Internationale* made it clear that both the

to reply that the conditions in the Ruhr were highly specific to that district and did not apply to other parts of Germany. (See *Bericht über den 2. Parteitag*, n.d., pp. 51–9).

111 Goldbach 1973, p. 56.

112 See on this Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, pp. 177–8.

113 *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 4/5, p. 13. On this, see Radek 1962, p. 162 and Goldbach 1973, p. 56, who says: 'The new theses endeavoured, with more sensitivity and patience than Levi's theses, to make the use of all tactical means, including the parliamentary tribune, comprehensible to ordinary party members'. They were published in issue number 12 of the Russian edition of the journal on the eve of the Second Comintern Congress, but at the congress itself they did not play a direct role, because in the meantime the Comintern leadership had presented its own theses, which naturally had the same slant. This was the first and also the last occasion on which the West European Secretariat independently formulated basic principles of communist action. (See Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, p. 179).

KPD *Zentrale* and the leadership of the RCP (b) stood behind these theses intended for 'international discussion' as a preparation for the next world congress of the Comintern.¹¹⁴

The content of the same issue of *Kommunistische Internationale* made it clear who was the target of these proceedings. It contained the theses worked out for a planned Western European conference¹¹⁵ by the Amsterdam bureau of the Comintern, which had been set up in November 1919.¹¹⁶ The Amsterdam bureau was organised by the Dutchman S.J. Rutgers, who had lived in the United States for many years, and had then gone directly from there to Soviet Russia, taking part in the first Comintern congress. In organising the bureau in October and November 1919, he relied on the small Netherlands Communist Party, which emerged out of a left faction which had already split from Social Democracy before the First World War. Individual members of it like Herman Gorter and Anton Pannekoek had already had contact with the Bolsheviks during the war.¹¹⁷ These two in particular had already made an international name for themselves as theoreticians of Marxism (which is why it became customary to refer to the 'Dutch school of Marxism'). Severe conflicts arose within the leadership of the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) after the end of the war, mainly because of the actions of the party leader, Wijnkoop.¹¹⁸ This

114 Thalheimer 1919, pp. 19–52.

115 Printed as 'Vorschläge aus Holland' in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 4/5, 1920, pp. 13–19, and also in *Bulletin of the Provisional Bureau of Amsterdam of the Communist International*, no. 1, February 1920, and as an appendix to Conti 1972, pp. 177–83.

116 On the Amsterdam bureau, see Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, pp. 182–9, 196–8, and Conti 1972. That the Bolsheviks set up two bureaux in Western Europe almost simultaneously can most likely be explained by the fact that in the conditions that prevailed in October 1919 it was by no means certain that both the emissaries sent independently of each other from Moscow would be able to get into Western Europe and take up their task. Moreover, it may well not have been clear yet to the ECCI that two divergent tendencies in communism would quickly form around the two centres.

117 On the Dutch background, see Wiessing 1980, who concentrates on the period we are concerned with here. For the wider historical context, see Bourrinet 1987. Theoretical texts from this tendency can be found in Bock 1969, Kool 1970, and Authier and Barrot 1976.

118 Wijnkoop had been elected to the Dutch parliament in 1918, and Gorter accused him of failing to take a genuinely neutral position between the Central Powers and the Entente, and as a result supporting the imperialism of the Western Powers. The Dutch communists were deeply divided over the question of participation in elections, though not on the trade-union question, where the party was at first united in espousing 'ultra-left' positions. When, in 1920, the Comintern launched its offensive against the 'ultra-left', this

made it difficult for Rutgers to organise the Amsterdam Bureau, but the Dutch communists as a whole continued to stand on the left wing of the international communist movement at this time. They insisted on the 'actuality of the revolution' as a result of the postwar situation. They were hostile to long-term 'non-revolutionary' mass activities. When, at the turn of the year 1919, it looked as if it would be possible to hold a conference of Western European communists, they summarised their position in the above-mentioned theses. In addition to dealing with a number of urgent matters (such as measures in support of Russia and the unification of communist groups in different countries), the theses dealt with questions of socialisation (or nationalisation), parliamentarism and the trade unions.

On the question of the trade unions, the theses did admittedly stress the need for workers to combine together on the economic level. But it was also noted that a powerful trade-union bureaucracy had grown up, and this had 'placed itself at the side of the bourgeoisie'. It was necessary to fight against this by 'organising a revolutionary opposition in the trade unions, and, where the situation has developed sufficiently, by creating new organisations'. Wherever revolutionary industrial unions of this type had arisen 'unions in which there was no conservative bureaucracy to obstruct the employment of fighting tactics' communists should give them their support. Apart from this, the new society would rest not only on trade unions, but also on factory councils. The Amsterdam Bureau supplemented these theses with statements clarifying their lapidary formulations with more detailed arguments and references to struggles actually proceeding at that time. The IWW in the United States and the Shop Stewards' Movement in Great Britain were quoted as examples of the new, revolutionary, industrial unions.¹¹⁹

The Amsterdam Bureau organised an international conference to strengthen its role and propagate its point of view. Numerous delegates from Great Britain and the United States came to the Netherlands for this purpose. The conference took place from 3 to 6 February 1920 and it adopted theses on the most important questions. One cannot avoid pointing out, however, that it was

led to a split in the party. Gorter, who was close to Pannekoek, founded a Communist Workers' Party, which always remained insignificant, while the majority of the CPN, led by Wijnkoop, adopted the new Comintern orthodoxy.

119 *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 4/5, 1920, pp. 16–18. The issue of the Amsterdam Bureau's own bulletin which also published these theses contained an article by 'Karl Horner' (the pseudonym of Herman Gorter) on the divisions within the KPD, in which he presented the various positions of the opposition (later to become the KAPD), especially on parliamentarism and the trade-union question, with a great deal of sympathy.

held in highly dubious circumstances.¹²⁰ Like many similar meetings at this period its composition was decided somewhat accidentally. Moreover, it was under close police surveillance, and the police brought it to a sudden end, just before a number of extra delegates were about to arrive and give it a more representative character. If this had happened, however, the conference's basic unity about fundamental questions would not have survived.

The largest number of participants came from the country in which it was held. Present alongside members of the Communist Party of the Netherlands was also the NAS member Bertus Bouwman, who would later play a role in the RILU. Numerous representatives of socialist organisations came from Great Britain, and the Shop Stewards' Movement was represented by J.T. Murphy. There was one delegate from Belgium and one from the opposition in the KPD. One of the two delegates from the USA, Louis Fraina, would play a dominant role in the course of the conference. (The tragic aspect of his situation was that the other US delegate turned out to be a police spy, which in turn gave credence to rumours that Fraina himself was a spy, rumours which were cleverly exploited by the police in the United States). Henk Sneevliet and another Indonesian were present as guests at the conference (the former as official representative of Indonesia). The British transport workers' leader Robert Williams also sent his greetings to the conference.

The trade-union theses, which concern us particularly here, were presented by Fraina. They constituted a considerable expansion of the original text, and they bore the imprint of the experience of the English-speaking countries. He started by admitting the need for trade unions as organisations for the economic struggle, but he was sharply critical of what he called 'trade-unionism', which only had the goal of improving the situation of individual groups of workers, in particular the skilled workers who formed a 'labour aristocracy'. He contraposed to this the construction of 'revolutionary industrial unions', which would be achieved by agitating for them, by setting up factory committees (consisting of shop stewards, and so on), and finally by 'transforming the trade unions into industrial unions'. At the same time, he stressed that these unions could not serve as an instrument for the seizure of power, which was the job of the Soviets (or Councils). On the whole, these theses remained peculiarly abstract when dealing with practical tasks. Unlike the ideas of the leftists

120 The Amsterdam Bureau's bulletin published an official report of the conference (no. 2, March 1920). More detailed accounts, drawing additionally on numerous contemporary reports, are to be found in Conti 1972, pp. 153–9; Wiessing 1980, pp. 99–102; Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, pp. 185–9; Bourrinet 1987, pp. 172–6; and Hulse 1964, pp. 154–8.

in the KPD, who at least called on the workers to leave the trade unions or laid down concrete conditions for splitting them, and indicated the form that the new revolutionary factory organisations would take, Fraina's prescriptions were entirely indeterminate. United States experience played a part in this. At that time, communists were in practice not members of the American trade-union movement. At most, they placed their hopes on the IWW.¹²¹ Fraina's theses were adopted unanimously, but in what was a relatively short discussion (according to the official minutes) Murphy did point out that industrial unions were by no means always revolutionary. And Bouwman gave an account of the historical background of the disagreements between Syndicalists and Social Democrats before the First World War, and in view of the current confrontation between the reformists and the revolutionary political and industrial organisations he called upon the latter to practise 'mutual aid and understanding'.

There had in fact been a short confrontation between the delegates the previous day over the relation between political and trade-union organisation. During the discussion on the organisation of the bureau, Fraina made two assertive interventions in favour of limiting the international bureau they were planning to set up to representatives of political organisations, and excluding representatives of economic organisations such as the Shop Stewards and the Unions. He was outvoted on this, and he also failed to gain sufficient support for an additional procedural proposal that a representative of the Shop Stewards' Movement could only secure a place after a genuinely representative congress, i.e. a congress with delegates from all countries, had voted in favour.

The line which crystallised out at this conference very quickly came under attack for its 'ultra-leftism'. Other conference resolutions confirmed this impression. In the words of the Italian historian Piero Conti:

The Amsterdam conference thus ended by sanctioning a split between two tendencies in the Western communist movement: a 'left' tendency, which had greater confidence that the goal of revolution in Europe could rapidly be achieved and therefore distrusted the traditional forms of struggle of the workers' movement such as the parliamentary activity or the use of trade unions to mediate in labour conflicts and a 'right' tendency which, although it proceeded from an almost identical analysis

121 As Theodore Draper (1957, p. 224) writes: 'In practice, supporting the IWW or not, propagating communism in the AFL or attempting to break it up, did not amount to a great deal of difference. These were the empty formulas of men whose contact with the trade unions was limited to their own pronouncements' (see also pp. 186 and 220 of the same work). For an account of the theoretical background of Fraina's analyses, see Buhle (1995).

of the European situation, deduced from this the need for more flexible tactics and more patient political work by the communists to infiltrate all the mass organisations of bourgeois society.¹²²

It is not simply from this political point of view that the proceedings of the conference were significant. It should be noted in addition that the line of action supported by this conference could hardly have led to the formation of mass communist parties in the next couple of years. The conference is also significant from the organisational angle, in relation to leadership by the Comintern. It plainly differed from other international communist conferences, both before and after. As Conti says:

To evaluate the real significance of the Amsterdam conference one must take into consideration that, with all its limitations, it nevertheless represented the only moment when a part of the Western communist movement worked out an autonomous political line. It remains the only attempt ever made to organise the Communist International on the basis of a certain parity and a certain degree of autonomous decision-making, which, if it had been successful, would have avoided the CI's excessive dependence on the RCP, which was later the determining factor in its failure as an instrument of world revolution.¹²³

It should not be overlooked, however, that the Amsterdam Bureau was not just in opposition to the views of the Bolsheviks or the Comintern leadership. Sections of the West European communist movement also rejected the line it advocated. This was shown by the attitude of the KPD delegates. As Clara Zetkin told the Third Congress of the KPD (25–26 February 1920), the invitation to the Amsterdam conference did not arrive in Berlin until three days before its official starting date.¹²⁴ When the German delegation, which also represented the West European Secretariat, arrived in Amsterdam, the conference had already broken up, in view of the involvement of police spies. There was

122 Conti 1972, pp. 157–8. Draper, not without irony in view of the later significance of the phrase, gives the section of his book which deals with Fraina and the Amsterdam conference the title: 'Amsterdam vs. Moscow' (1957, p. 232).

123 Conti 1972, p. 158.

124 See Zetkin's report, 'Die internationale Lage und Bericht von der internationalen Konferenz in Amsterdam', in *Bericht über den 3. Parteitag*, pp. 69–84. The expulsion of the opposition was confirmed once more at this congress (*Bericht über den 3. Parteitag*, pp. 7, 33). Two months later, the opposition constituted itself as the KAPD.

instead an informal discussion between the Amsterdam Bureau, some of the Amsterdam delegates and the representatives of the KPD, at which there was a sharp clash of contradictory opinions. What was at stake above all in this conflict between the West European Secretariat and the Amsterdam Bureau was each side's claim to leadership. It was finally agreed that both bodies would continue their separate activities for three months, avoiding conflicts if possible. Then a really representative conference would be called to make a final decision. The Third KPD Congress did not engage in any further discussion of the differences between the two, but another member of the KPD delegation to Amsterdam, Paul Frölich, made them clear when he added this to Zetkin's report:

The fundamental character of the resolution on the trade union question is shown by the assertion that the trade unions are organs of the labour aristocracy and must therefore be destroyed. The Dutch comrades accused us of always failing to look at the question from this point of view. We replied that even our opponents in Germany had never reproached us with this. Moreover, they could not maintain, without making themselves ridiculous, that the six million German trade unionists belonged to the labour aristocracy.¹²⁵

If the members of the Amsterdam Bureau had any illusion that their position was accepted in Moscow, or even comprehended there,¹²⁶ they were soon set right on that point. For one thing, Lenin wrote an uncompromising reply to their ideas, under the title *'Left-Wing' Communism – An Infantile Disorder*.¹²⁷ In this text, written in a simple and precise style of great persuasive power, Lenin attempted to derive lessons from the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the Russian

¹²⁵ *Bericht über den 3. Parteitag*, p. 88.

¹²⁶ Illusions of this kind were very widespread during these few months among 'ultra-leftists' all over the world. They were based on old friendships and the support the Bolsheviks had received during the war from the Netherlands. See Bock's comments about this as an explanation for the expectations of the KPD opposition after the Heidelberg Congress (1993, p. 226). The Bolsheviks did make definite attempts to achieve a reconciliation with the opposition, for example in dealing with the KAPD, as we shall show later. But the aim of these efforts was simply to win back those who had split away from the official communist movement. They were prepared to make minimal organisational concessions, but there could be no question of concessions on matters of principle.

¹²⁷ Lenin 1966 [1920], vol. 31, pp. 17–104. According to the date given at the end of the main text of this work, it was completed on 27 April 1920.

Revolution, which were 'universally valid' and therefore semi-compulsory for the communists of Western Europe. It was necessary to engage in compromises, he said, in order to win the majority of the working class. In particular, he advocated taking part in parliamentary elections and entering 'reactionary' trade unions. The pamphlet was finished at the end of April 1920, but because of the difficult situation in the country it could not appear in Moscow until June, first in Russian, and then, a month later, in Western languages, just in time for the beginning of the Second Comintern Congress.¹²⁸

In autumn 1920, it was published in the West as well, and it was widely distributed. It became one of the key texts of the international communist movement, drawn on again and again to justify shifts in the political line. Even before this, the section which deals specifically with the trade unions received advance publication in the journal *Kommunistische Internationale*.¹²⁹ In this, Lenin contradicts the views of the German and Dutch 'lefts', emphasising the mass character of the trade unions even under a 'reactionary' leadership. They represent a tremendous step forward, he says, in comparison with the former absence of working-class organisation. It was unconditionally necessary to fight in the ranks of the trade unions, rather than create more or less exclusively communist 'unions', he said. To demand that communists leave the trade unions was only to help reactionary trade-union leaders, who wanted to exclude revolutionaries everywhere. It was necessary to 'agree to make every sacrifice and even – if need be – to resort to various stratagems, artifices and illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, in order to get into the trade unions, remain in them, and carry on communist work within them at all costs'.¹³⁰

This text was of immense significance. As one of the founders of the RILU was to put it years later, 'it was here for the first time that the rules and fundamental principles of tactics were drawn out and formulated so clearly, we might even say brutally'.¹³¹ It cannot be disputed that the general policy prescribed by this text did in fact allow the communists to overcome their initial status of being members of a sect and win mass influence. To be sure, it had yet fur-

128 See the information given in Lenin 1966 [1920], vol. 31, p. 539. This is why the pamphlet contains an Appendix written in the middle of May, in which Lenin deals with a number of events that had recently come to his notice, without changing the fundamental line of his argument in any way.

129 N. Lenin, 'Sollen Revolutionäre in reaktionären Gewerkschaften arbeiten?', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1920, pp. 250–8.

130 Lenin 1966 [1920], *Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 55.

131 Rosmer 1971, p. 53. The whole passage (pp. 49–55) is important for the background to Lenin's pamphlet on left-wing radicalism.

ther consequences for the future, as Buhle points out: '[F]rom another standpoint, Lenin and the Russians ruling the Comintern had expressed themselves, whether intentionally or unintentionally, in such a manner as to discourage ... any independent thought or creative adaptation within the national parties. The price for this purportedly iron discipline was immense, and some of the price must be laid at Lenin's feet, quite apart from the validity of the strategic particulars in his *diktat*'.¹³²

With this, a theoretical line separating the communists from the 'ultra-left' had been clearly drawn. This happened on the practical level as well. At the end of April, the ECCI decided to dissolve the Amsterdam Bureau, at a sitting in Petrograd expanded by the inclusion of representatives from abroad. The reasons given were, among others, that the Bureau 'had taken up a position in a series of important matters (the trade union question, parliamentarism) which run counter to the position of the ECCI'. Its functions were transferred to the West European Secretariat in Berlin.¹³³ Despite this, the Bureau tried to continue its activities.¹³⁴ There were also protests against the high-handed way the decision had been carried out, particularly from the Communist Youth International.¹³⁵ But it was already clear in advance of the Second Comintern Congress that in view of the clear position taken by the Bolsheviks, the 'ultra-lefts' were fighting a losing battle. The confirmation of the Bolshevik line at the Second Congress could not be anything other than a formality.

The principle that communists should work within the reformist trade-union movement of their own country was thus clearly stated and made obligatory. But at the international level, the question remained open. What concrete form of action would the Comintern aim for in this case?

The Comintern's press organ had already published a contribution to the discussion on this question at the end of 1919, by G.V. Tsyperovich, who was at that time the chairman of the trade unions of Petrograd.¹³⁶ Taking a broad sweep, and beginning with the First International, he outlined the develop-

132 Buhle 1995, p. 100. Rosmer quotes two similar contemporary commentaries by 'ultra-left' communists (Rosmer 1971, p. 53).

133 'Sitzung des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1920, pp. 237–40, here p. 240.

134 Conti 1972, pp. 164–5. The ECCI reacted angrily when it heard about this, and it confirmed its decision in a number of radio-telegrams, in which it also referred mysteriously to various financial irregularities. These accusations were later withdrawn.

135 Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, pp. 197–8.

136 G. Zyperowitsch, 'Die Internationale der Gewerkschaften', *Kommunistische Internationale*, nos. 7–8, November–December 1919, pp. 38–44.

ment of the international trade-union movement and presented its different forms of organisation and tendencies. While the traditional trade-union leaderships had shown during the world war that they were 'yellow' traitors to the working class, completely new forms of organisation had emerged after the end of the war in the shape of the Councils. The trade-union movement was becoming transformed under their influence, and 'red' trade unions were arising. The IFTU's Amsterdam Congress, the Washington Labour Conference and the recent attempt by the IFTU to approach the Russian trade unions were all nothing more than 'attempts to deceive the working masses'. To counter this, he called for the 'formation of a ... red international of trade unions ... It should neither isolate itself from the Third International nor lag behind it. It should rather proceed at the same pace'.¹³⁷ In this connection, he had great hopes of the congress of the International Transportworkers' Federation which had just been announced.

But this argument in favour of a revolutionary trade-union international, running parallel to the Comintern, had been composed by someone who did not have a particularly important political function. It was Zinoviev himself, the chairman of the Comintern, who developed an organisational plan out of this proposal (thereby giving his remarks of September to Rudnyánszky a more concrete form), and this would provide the guiding thread followed by the international communist movement in the next few months.

At the beginning of 1920, in the context of discussions within the Bolshevik Party about the proper role of the trade unions, he composed some extensive theses on 'the economic tasks, and the organisational and propaganda aims, of the party and the unions of producers [*Produktionsverbände*] in the present epoch' – this was the subtitle of the article. These were, first and foremost, related to concrete policies to be pursued in Russia (such as the 'governmentalisation' [*Verstaatlichung*] of the trade unions, the mode of work by the communist fractions within them, and the relation between the factory committees and the trade unions), and summed up the experience of trade-union work so far in Russia.¹³⁸ But the last three sections concerned aspects of international significance, in which he drew the line separating communism from syndicalism and industrial unionism ('industrialism') and, lastly, dealt with the problem of creating a trade-union international: 'The trade union movement of Russia should take the initiative by combining different groups to form a Red Trade

¹³⁷ Tsyperovich, art. cit., pp. 42–3.

¹³⁸ G. Sinowjew, 'Brennende Tagesfragen der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung. Die Partei und die Gewerkschaften', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 9, 1920, pp. 13–27. Also printed in Zinoviev 1926, vol. 6, pp. 329–47.

Union International, just as the Russian Communist Party did when setting up the Third International'.¹³⁹ But this new body should also form part of the Comintern. He explained what this meant in organisational terms in a draft resolution composed on the basis of these theses for the Ninth Party Congress of the RCP (b) (29 March to 5 April 1920): 'The international of unions of producers must form a section of the Third (Communist) International'.¹⁴⁰ By expressing this idea, he also formulated the objectives which the Comintern would follow in the next few months in its discussions and disputes with foreign socialists and trade unionists.

The new perspective found official expression in a 'Letter to the Trade Unions of All Countries' signed by Zinoviev in the name of the Comintern Executive and sent at some point in the middle of March.¹⁴¹ In this letter, the attitude of the trade-union leaderships during the world war was sharply attacked, and ascribed to the 'trade-unionist' limitations of a bureaucracy interested in representing only the labour aristocracy. But now, Zinoviev went on, a current of militancy had arisen which was breathing new life into the trade unions despite meeting great resistance. The trade-union bureaucracy gathered together in the IFTU, with the support of the international bourgeoisie, was opposing this movement. The Comintern now wished to establish an international

139 Sinowjew 1920, p. 27; also printed in Zinoviev 1926, vol. 6, p. 345.

140 'Proekt rezoliutsii G. Zinov'eva o professional'nykh soiuзов', in Zinoviev 1926, vol. 6, p. 353; also in Zinoviev 1920, pp. 110–17, which also contains (on p. 110) preliminary remarks by Krestinsky, who was party secretary at the time. Krestinsky states that this draft resolution is not yet officially approved, since it needs first to be brought into line by the CC with its resolution on the economy (in regard to the management of factories), but it should be distributed among the local party organisations for information. It is true that the Ninth Party Congress had 'Trade Unions' as a point on its agenda, but this was essentially concerned with the role they should take in managing the economy. The theses of the CC themselves contained no reference at all to international tasks, nor did the congress subsequently add such a reference. (See *Deviatyi S'ezd RKP (b). Mart-aprel' 1920g. Protokoly*, Moscow 1960, pp. 211–61, 380–1, 416–22 and 588–61). An appendix to this volume of congress minutes contains discussion theses by Tomsy, published at the beginning of March 1920. The last paragraph reads: 'The opening of the borders provides a real foundation for the endeavours of the Russian trade unions to restore relations with the organised proletariat of other countries and for the creation of an international association on the basis of a genuine fight for the liberation of labour from the yoke of capital and a merciless struggle with the exploiters under the banner of the Third International' (op. cit., p. 565).

141 *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1920, pp. 259–65. [Extracts printed in translation in Degras 1956, pp. 87–90]. The date can be deduced from the accompanying greetings of 17 March to the congress of the ITF. On this point, see note 63.

organisation of 'red' trade unions to combat the 'yellow' International. Referring explicitly to the example set by the First International, Zinoviev wrote that the Third International must include not just political parties but all revolutionary trade unions. Their international organisation must therefore form a part of the Comintern.

This circular was then sent to, among other places, the congress of the ITF, which was meeting in Christiania (Oslo) from 15–19 March, together with the Comintern's greetings. In it Zinoviev expressed his 'conviction' that the 'congress would prove itself equal to the tasks the epoch has placed on the agenda'. The ITF replied with a short telegram of thanks, saying that it would 'perform its duty in the struggle of the proletariat for liberation'.¹⁴² Zinoviev's circular naturally met with greater success at the third Russian trade-union congress in April, which announced that it had joined the Comintern.¹⁴³ Nothing further, however, resulted from the sending out of this circular until the discussions with the British and Italian delegations in the middle of June. This is in any case clear from Zinoviev's report to the Second Comintern Congress, which, apart from expressing 'definite expectations' of progress, only contained programmatic declarations on the trade-union question.¹⁴⁴

There were in fact some national trade-union centres which had already adhered formally to the Comintern, but this was a result of special circumstances. The case of the Russian trade unions is one example. In addition,

142 'Gruss an den internationalen Kongress der Transportarbeiter', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 9, 1920, pp. 180–1; 'Gruss des internationalen Transportarbeiterkongresses', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1920, p. 191. The ITF's answer was not unfriendly. This was perhaps because the congress had presumably only received the message of greeting and not the circular, sent separately, with its attacks on 'yellow' trade-union leaders. See below, chapter 2, section 4, on the transport workers' congress and the attempt of the Russian trade unions to join it, which was unsuccessful because their representatives arrived too late.

143 On this, see its message of greeting to the ECCI and the collection of declarations by the congress on international questions printed in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, pp. 188–91 and 233–4.

144 G. Sinowjew, *Bericht des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Petrograd 1920, pp. 24–6. Shliapnikov, one of the Russian representatives sent to the ITF congress, was obliged to send back a negative report on the situation in Western Europe in mid-April: 'We shall have to make considerable modifications to the programme of action we sketched out. Above all, the idea of calling a meeting of trade unions which stand on the platform of the Third International must be temporarily set aside, because the comrades who share our views have only just begun to carry out work in the trade unions' (quoted in Chechevishnikov 1990, p. 81).

the trade-union centres of two further countries were organisationally linked with workers' parties which had declared their intention to join the Comintern. From its foundation onwards, the CGL in Italy had considered itself to be closely connected with the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI). This connection was formalised in September 1918 when an actual pact was concluded between the two, assigning political leadership to the party and the direction of the economic struggle to the trade unions.¹⁴⁵ The PSI was the only mass social-democratic party to oppose the First World War, and it regarded itself as a revolutionary party. The leadership of the PSI had already proclaimed its entry into the Comintern in March 1919, at the same time as the latter's founding congress, at which it was not represented; this decision was confirmed at a party congress in October (although many disputes and disagreements on the issue lay ahead).¹⁴⁶ This decision meant that the CGL was also attached to the Third International, at least in theory. In Norway, similarly, there were direct organisational links between the party and the trade unions. Many of the trade unions had collective membership in the Workers' Party, and there was overlapping membership between the party executive and the central trade-union organisation (the AFL or *Arbeidernes faglige landsorganisasjon*). The Norwegian Workers' Party was the only mass Western party represented at the founding congress of the Comintern, and the party congress of June 1919 gave its formal approval to membership of that body. This placed the Norwegian Trade Union Federation in the same situation as the CGL.¹⁴⁷

The trade-union question had therefore become more and more urgent for the Comintern leadership on the eve of the Second World Congress, which was due to start in July 1920. The 'ultra-leftists' had a strong presence among the young communist parties, and their demand for withdrawal from the trade unions had to be rejected in the most decisive manner. When the ECCI summoned the Second World Congress of the Comintern, therefore, it proposed to include the trade unions as a point on the agenda, with a view to establishing a definite position on relations with them.¹⁴⁸ Its own view was sketched out in a draft set of theses published just before the congress convened. In this document, the idea of leaving the trade unions was once again condemned, and the

145 See Ambrosoli 1961, pp. 302–9 and 363–5.

146 König 1967, pp. 34–5 and 51–5; Spriano 1967, pp. 20–36.

147 Lorenz 1978, pp. 46–7 and 95–100.

148 'Über die Einberufung des 2. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 11, 1920, pp. 1–4.

need to form communist party fractions within them reaffirmed. An attempt should be made to co-operate with the syndicalists, but never at the expense of maintaining a clear perspective. The aim would be rather to overcome their 'prejudices'.¹⁴⁹ What was proposed for the future of the trade unions was that they should leave the Amsterdam International and join the Comintern.¹⁵⁰

Thus a 'correct' attitude in the trade-union question had now become of decisive importance to the Comintern leadership. According to the Open Letter sent by the ECCI to the KAPD at the beginning of June: 'The Amsterdam International of social-democratic unions is a far more serious opponent of the Communist International than the Brussels International Bureau of the Second International ... If the Second International has any mass support in the working-class movement it is *only* because of the trade unions ... The most important current task of the proletarian revolution is to destroy the Amsterdam International of "free" trade unions just as we destroyed the Brussels Second International'.¹⁵¹

149 'Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung, die Betriebsräte und die III. Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 12, 1920, pp. 19–26. [Extracts in English in Degras 1956, pp. 145–50].

150 The circular announcing the Second Comintern Congress once again expressly invited all trade unions to send their delegates. But in fact the only trade-union delegates who came were syndicalists, apart from the Russian trade-union representatives who were part of the Bolshevik delegation.

151 'Offenes Schreiben an die Mitglieder der Kommunistischen Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 11, 1920, pp. 192–213, here p. 198. [In English in Degras 1956, p. 97]. Zinoviev made similar comments in an earlier article: 'And one can say without exaggeration that the plundering League of Nations is now less dangerous for the international proletarian revolution than the Amsterdam International of yellow trade unions. That the League of Nations is a gang of thieves is beginning to be understood by even the most backward workers in the countries of Western Europe. That the Amsterdam Trade Union International is actually an agency of the same band of robbers, is something that millions upon millions even of organised workers in the same countries do not yet understand. One can say with certainty that if we were to succeed in bringing over to our side the great trade unions which are now the sole support of bourgeois politics, we should have removed from the path the main obstacle to the successful and rapid development of the proletarian revolution'. (Sinowjew 1920, 'Brennende Tagesfragen der internationalen Arbeiterbewegung. Der II. Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale und seine Aufgaben', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1920, pp. 28–56, here pp. 41–2).

3 The Impact of the October Revolution on the Revolutionary Syndicalists¹⁵²

The way the Bolsheviks evaluated the different currents in the international left after the foundation of the Comintern was plainly outlined by the Comintern's chairman, Zinoviev, in his circular letter on parliamentarism, sent on 1 September 1919:

The old divisions in the international workers' movement have clearly become obsolete. The war has created a new alignment. Many of the anarchists and syndicalists who rejected parliamentarianism behaved just as contemptibly and treacherously during the five years of war as the old leaders of official social democracy, who take the name of Marx in vain. Forces are being mobilised along a new line – on one side those who are *for* the proletarian revolution, *for* mass action rising to armed insurrection – on the other side those who are *against* this. *That* is the basic question of our time. *That* is the main criterion. That is the distinguishing feature around which the new associations are already coalescing, and they will continue to do so.¹⁵³

The letter of invitation to the founding congress of the Comintern, drafted by Trotsky, already refers explicitly to the importance of the syndicalists: 'On the other hand, it is necessary to form a bloc with those elements in the revolutionary workers' movement who, although they did not formerly belong to socialist parties, now stand by and large for the proletarian dictatorship in the form of Soviet power. Chief among these are the syndicalist elements in the workers' movement'. Hence the addressees of this letter, alongside communist parties and opposition groups within Social Democracy, also included revolutionary syndicalists in France, the IWW in various English-speaking countries, and the Shop Stewards' Movement in Great Britain.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² This section, as well as my later treatment of the syndicalists, owes much to the suggestions contained in Wayne Thorpe's book, *The Workers Themselves* (1989), although individual references to it have not always been made.

¹⁵³ 'Rundschreiben des Exekutiv-Komitees der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 3, 1919, pp. 71–4, here p. 72. [English translation in Degras 1956, p. 67].

¹⁵⁴ 'Einladung zum ersten Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale', in *Die Gründung der Dritten Internationale. Erste Konferenz der Kommunistischen Internationale in Moskau abgehalten vom 2. bis 6. März 1919*, Vienna, 1919, pp. 3–7. [English translation: 'Invitation to

There were no representatives of revolutionary syndicalism at the first Comintern congress (it should be added that few representatives of the Marxist and socialist supporters of the Bolsheviks were themselves able to attend the first congress). Even so, the work of the minority of the CGT in France and the activities of the Shop Stewards in Britain were both stressed in the country reports presented at that congress. In the 'Platform', too, which stated the programme of the congress, the insistence on the need to break with the Kautskyite 'Centre' is counterbalanced by an equal insistence, in words which are almost identical to those in the letter of invitation, on the need to 'form a bloc with those elements in the revolutionary workers' movement which, although they did not formerly belong to the socialist party, now adhere by and large to the standpoint of proletarian dictatorship in the form of Soviet power, i.e. certain elements in syndicalism'.¹⁵⁵ In essence this was simply the result of the experience of the world war, when syndicalists and left-wing socialists collaborated closely in a number of countries, above all in France.

But what attitude did the revolutionary syndicalists themselves take to the new International? In France, the grouping around Alfred Rosmer and Pierre Monatte in the CGT, which had published the periodical *La Vie Ouvrière* until the beginning of the war, had been one of the pillars of the Zimmerwald movement. They had begun to modify their syndicalist principles under the influence of their co-operation with Trotsky, Lozovsky and the other Russian revolutionaries. When they announced in March 1919 that *La Vie Ouvrière* would start to come out again, they acknowledged two personal obligations: 'Rolland and Trotsky: these two men saved us from horror and despair, they gave us a reason for living and re-awakened our trust in mankind and in the revolution'.¹⁵⁶

In the first issue of *La Vie Ouvrière* after its reappearance, Alfred Rosmer gave his support to the idea that the war had created a new situation: 'On one side there are the traitors, the socialist defaulters, who, when confronted with the revolution, realise that they are democrats pure and simple; on the other

the First Congress of the Communist International', in Degras 1956, p. 3]. In the preparatory discussions, Lenin also emphatically supported the involvement of the syndicalists in the International. (See Hájek and Mejdrová 1997, pp. 68–9).

155 The platform is printed in *Der 1. Kongress* 1921, pp. 185–92, here pp. 191–2 [English translation, 'Platform of the Communist International Adopted by the First Congress', in Degras 1956, p. 23].

156 Quoted from their circular 'Le 16. avril la "Vie Ouvrière" reparaitra', by Wohl 1966, p. 135. The French novelist Romain Rolland had protested against the slaughter of the First World War in September 1914 in his appeal entitled 'Au-dessus de la Mêlée'.

side the revolutionaries. In reality, there cannot be two Internationals'. The new, revolutionary International would combine the forces of socialism and syndicalism, which had already jointly undertaken the struggle during the war at the conferences of Zimmerwald and Kienthal.¹⁵⁷

The theory and strategy of revolutionary syndicalism before the world war can be evaluated in various ways, but the Bolsheviks had now put revolutionary principles into practice, and thereby achieved exactly what the syndicalists had been striving for. The Soviet was no different from a local trade-union federation, and Soviet Russia was basically a syndicalist republic, the syndicalists thought. As Rosmer wrote: 'If one reads ... Pelloutier's history of the *bourses du travail* [chambers of labour] one is struck by the similarity'.¹⁵⁸ One writer in *La Vie Ouvrière* went so far as to say that the Russian Revolution was inspired by Proudhon.¹⁵⁹ In summer 1920, under questioning by the police, Monatte gave a classic example of ideological eclecticism: 'Our propaganda, ... to put it more precisely, is simultaneously syndicalist and communist. Our grouping is a mixture of syndicalism and Bolshevism'.¹⁶⁰ Thus *La Vie Ouvrière* became not only the voice of the opposition within the CGT, it also became the French organ of the Third International. When it published texts both from Moscow and from the Amsterdam Bureau, it was aiming at a trade-union audience.

The group around *La Vie Ouvrière* was the core element of the CGT minority. But there were also forces within the minority, around Péricat, the leader of the building workers, which wanted to go further.¹⁶¹ The *Comité de défense syndicaliste* he led had already proclaimed the creation of a communist party in June 1919, but there was not much response to this.¹⁶² Left forces within the socialist party offered more favourable prospects for the creation of a communist party with a mass basis; their factional activities promised to win over a majority of members. The *Comité pour la troisième Internationale*, which was formed in May 1919 as a continuation of the pro-Zimmerwald Committee for the Res-

157 *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 1, 30 April 1919, quoted here from Labi 1964, p. 113. See also Wohl 1966, p. 135.

158 Alfred Rosmer 1919, 'La C.G.T. et l'Internationale', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 20, 10 September. There are similar comments quoted in Wohl 1966, p. 136.

159 Wohl 1966, p. 136.

160 Quoted in Kriegel 1964, I, p. 313.

161 On Péricat, see Sirot 1995, pp. 25–46.

162 This first, 'ultra-left' communist party in France had already split by autumn 1919. It was imbued with the traditions of anarcho-syndicalism. Its existence, therefore, ultimately rested on a fundamental misunderstanding of what Bolshevism meant. See Annie Kriegel's comments in Kriegel 1964, vol. 1, pp. 282–307.

toration of International Relations, was a connecting link between the different socialist and syndicalist opposition forces.¹⁶³ Of course, the opposition currents in the CGT and the socialist party developed at different speeds: the Comintern would ultimately find greater acceptance in the party than in the trade union.

The minority in the CGT now concentrated its efforts entirely on intensifying the fight in the economic sphere. It seemed possible that a change of union leadership could result from this. The strikes of early 1919 not only failed to bring revolution closer in France, but also by and large ended in defeat.¹⁶⁴ This sharpened the confrontation within the CGT. At the Lyons Congress of 15–21 September, it broke out openly.¹⁶⁵ The CGT Minority attacked the CGT leadership for its failure to organise strikes, particularly the one called for 21 July and then cancelled, and forcefully demanded that it defend the Russian Revolution (and the Hungarian one) by mounting a campaign against foreign intervention. What was important, the Minority said, was to drive the world revolution forward. But the discussion over the world revolution was still entirely conducted in terms of a dispute over the true meaning of the principles of the CGT, as they had been laid down in the Charter of Amiens. The question of an organisational connection with Moscow was not posed. The supporters of the General Secretary of the CGT, Jouhaux, still had a solid majority of more than two-thirds at the congress, partly owing to his alliance with certain ‘centrist’ trade-union leaders, who had supported the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences during the war, but now, under the impact of the Bolshevik seizure of power, set their faces against any moves towards revolution.¹⁶⁶ The Minority reacted to its defeat by becoming more organised. At a conference in October, a ‘*Comité provisoire de la minorité*’ was set up, and in the following year it would form the basis for the ‘*Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires*’, which constituted in fact a parallel organisation to the CGT.

163 See Wohl 1966, pp. 132–4 and Kriegel 1964, 1, pp. 323–7.

164 On this, see Labi 1964, pp. 116–23 and Wohl 1966, pp. 136–9. As indicated above, there was also a very specific defeat: the international solidarity strike for Soviet Russia and the Hungarian Council Republic, called for 21 July on the proposal of the Italian socialists, was cancelled at short notice by the CGT leadership, something which in turn increased Moscow’s hostility towards the ‘social traitors’. See G. Sinowjew, ‘Zwei Daten (21 Juli–1 August 1919)’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, nos. 4–5, 1919, pp. 66–74.

165 On this congress, see Labi 1964, pp. 126–32; Wohl 1966, pp. 139–40 and Kriegel 1964, vol. 1, pp. 319–23. For the minutes of the congress, see *xxe congrès national corporatif (xive de la c. g. t.). Tenu à Lyon du 15 au 21 Septembre 1919. Compte tenu des travaux*, Villeneuve, 1919.

166 The most prominent spokesmen of ‘Centrism’ were Alphonse Merrheim and Georges Dumoulin. They would play a decisive role in the conflicts of the years that followed.

The Minority also increased their efforts to make contact with the Bolsheviks, although they were often unsuccessful in this in view of the precarious state of communications. On 13 March 1920, for instance, Monatte wrote two letters to Moscow, one addressed to Trotsky and one to Lozovsky, which were given to an American to take to Russia. The American was killed in Germany in the course of an arrest operation, so that Monatte's letters reached the French police instead.¹⁶⁷ In the letter to Lozovsky, Monatte enquired as to how things stood with regard to the international conference (the conference proposed by the Russian trade unions had been welcomed in France, as the Amsterdam Bureau of the Third International had already been able to announce)¹⁶⁸ and in general with regard to the question of setting up a counter-international to the Amsterdam body. At the end of April, Alfred Rosmer then set out for Moscow, officially as the representative of the *Comité pour la troisième Internationale*, but also in the name of the group around *La Vie Ouvrière*.¹⁶⁹

Those who remained faithful to the prewar principles of syndicalism represented only a minority of the CGT, however. We must now move on to look at the position taken by organisations in other countries, which had held onto the revolutionary standpoint during the war – though not without internal disagreements – and conducted a vigorous opposition to it. These organisations were the backbone of the attempts that were made to create a syndicalist international, starting from the basis of the London Conference of 1913 (attempts which were in fact opposed at that time by the group around *La Vie Ouvrière*).

In Spain, the CNT had enthusiastically supported and identified itself with the Russian Revolution.¹⁷⁰ It praised the courage and revolutionary determination of the Bolsheviks, which had allowed them to overthrow capitalism and the big landowners and defend themselves against the worldwide onslaught of the interventionist powers. It is interesting to note that the initial feeling of solidarity went further among the 'pure' anarchists, who considered that the developments in Russia marked a realisation of the revolutionary deed, than the 'pure' syndicalists, who were aware that the revolutionary government in Russia did not rest on the trade unions.

167 The letters have been published in Chambelland and Maitron 1968, pp. 267–8.

168 Kriegel 1964, vol. 2, p. 733.

169 The best source for this journey (and for his later visits to Moscow) is Alfred Rosmer himself (Rosmer 1971). As his biographer has written, it was through 'his knowledge of languages, his friendship with Trotsky and his familiarity with international matters' that he became the French representative in Moscow, since Monatte did not want to travel (Gras 1971, p. 172).

170 Meaker 1974, pp. 99–108 and 122–5; Bar 1981, pp. 436–51.

The very first reaction of the CNT, the day after its central organ, *Solidaridad Obrera*, had reported the Bolshevik seizure of power, came from its secretary Manuel Buenacasa, who went so far as to compare the Russian soviets with the syndicalist federations in Spain.¹⁷¹ But the criticism soon surfaced, though in a restrained form, that Bolshevik state socialism was not entirely compatible with the anarchist programme. Nevertheless, the predominant view was that the Bolsheviks had gone a considerable way towards putting anarchism into practice, and there was no doubt about their revolutionary intentions. The prevailing mood could not have been expressed better than it was by José Viadiu in *Solidaridad Obrera* on 16 December 1918, in the following singularly emotional passage: 'Bolshevism is the name, but the idea is that of all revolutions: economic freedom ... Bolshevism represents the end of superstition, of dogma, of slavery, of tyranny, of crime ... Bolshevism is the new life we are striving for, it is peace, justice and equality, it is the life we want and are determined to bring about all over the world'.¹⁷²

Solidarity with the Bolsheviks also meant supporting the Third International.¹⁷³ *Solidaridad Obrera* had itself acted against the war by calling the congress of El Ferrol in April 1915, it had expressed its solidarity with the Zimmerwald and Kienthal movement, and, on 23 October 1918, it wrote that after the failure of the First and Second Internationals, a third international was necessary. Shortly after this, the National Committee of the CNT, in a manifesto on the end of the war, repeated that a Workers' International was a necessity.

This new international they had in mind would doubtless incorporate anarcho-syndicalist principles first and foremost. But in that case, what would their attitude be towards the actually existing Third International, founded in Moscow in March 1919?

The official position of the CNT was laid down at its Madrid congress held between 10–18 December 1919.¹⁷⁴ The movement had experienced a spectacular upsurge over the year, above all in Catalonia, where the formation of industrial unions or 'factory unions' [*sindicatos unicos*] had played an important part, but also among the agricultural workers of Andalusia. The CNT had been able to register great success as a result of the powerful wave of strikes which seized the country in 1919. With more than 600,000 members it was now approximately

171 See the passage from *Solidaridad Obrera* for 12 November 1917, quoted in Bar 1981, p. 446.

172 Quoted in Bar 1981, p. 451.

173 See Bar 1981, pp. 447–9.

174 The minutes of this congress have been published: *Memoria del Congreso celebrado en el Teatro de la Comedia de Madrid, los días 10 al 18 de Diciembre de 1919*, Barcelona, 1932. There are summaries in Bar 1981, pp. 489–555 and Meaker 1974, pp. 233–48.

three times as numerous as its socialist rival, the UGT. The Madrid congress therefore took place at the climax of a broad radicalisation process, and it was dominated by revolutionary optimism, though this was quickly followed by a rude awakening in view of the massive wave of repression which broke over the movement, particularly in its Catalan stronghold.

The congress dealt with central strategic questions such as the attitude to be taken to unity of action with the UGT and the establishment everywhere of 'factory unions', and it confirmed the principles of anarcho-syndicalism. However, it also discussed its relationship with the Russian Revolution and the Third International.¹⁷⁵ A congress committee [*Ponencia*] was set up to examine the matter, and it proposed a resolution which, on the one hand, gave unconditional support for the revolution, but on the other hand expressed reservations about the Third International, since that organisation, although it was revolutionary, did not follow the 'anti-authoritarian and decentralising ideal' of the CNT. An international congress should therefore be called to found a genuinely syndicalist international, which would be committed to 'libertarian communism'.¹⁷⁶

But the mood among the delegates turned out to be more pro-Bolshevik than this implied, partly on account of the attacks made on the Russian Revolution from the bourgeois and socialist camps. The delegates were fiercely hostile to the latter in particular, and they saw a declaration of solidarity with Russia as a way of condemning the socialists' anti-revolutionary attitude. Only one of the delegates declared his solidarity with the political principles of the Comintern. This was Hilario Arlándis, and it was not a coincidence that he counted as one of the supporters of the RILU in 1921. His long quotations from the resolutions of the founding congress of the Comintern were also greeted with protests, not perhaps because of their content, but rather because of their length, since the proceedings of the Madrid congress had already turned into a marathon session.¹⁷⁷ Equally, only one speaker came out decisively against the Bolsheviks. This was Eleuterio Quintanilla, from Asturias. No, he said, 'the Russian revolution does not embody the ideals of revolutionary syndicalism in principle'. He did, it is true, express admiration for their revolutionary courage, but the Russian Revolution had merely created a new government. The goal to be aimed at, however, was not the dictatorship of a government, but rule by the trade unions. He compared the Russian Revolution with the French one,

¹⁷⁵ See *Memoria* 1932, pp. 340–74 for this discussion.

¹⁷⁶ *Memoria* 1932, pp. 341–2.

¹⁷⁷ *Memoria* 1932, pp. 346–52.

in which the Jacobins had come into conflict with the popular movement. The CNT ought not to enter the Third International, because this was a political organisation. It should instead help to create an international of revolutionary syndicalists.¹⁷⁸

But it was recognised spokesmen of the CNT, such as Eusebio Carbó and Salvador Seguí, who expressed the mood of most of the delegates. They stated their commitment to anarchist principles, certainly, and they therefore also agreed with much of what Quintanilla had said.¹⁷⁹ But Carbó added that while rejecting the dictatorship in principle, one would still need to understand the particular circumstances of the Civil War. It was not the revolution that was responsible for the violence and its victims. And Seguí added that they wanted to join the Third International as a step on the way to the 'true' International. In line with this, the congress unanimously adopted a resolution in which the CNT on the one hand stated its commitment to the principles of the First International 'as represented by Bakunin', and on the other hand decided to join the Third International 'provisionally' and to start preparations for an international congress in Spain to establish a 'genuine workers' international'. Finally, in order to remove any possible misunderstanding and to assert its own identity once again, it added a further phrase explicitly confirming that the CNT's aim was to establish 'libertarian communism'.¹⁸⁰

Although this actually concluded the congress, the chair of the session allowed a Catalan delegate, Andreu Nin, who had hardly spoken up to that point and even now did not bring forward any significant new argument, to make a personal declaration.¹⁸¹ His purpose in doing this was to distance himself from the local Socialist Party, in which he had previously occupied a prominent position. Since he was soon to lead the communist current in the CNT, the details of his declaration are significant. He stated that he had originally wanted to speak during the congress, but did not feel able to do so. His thoughts had already been expressed in part by Quintanilla, and in part by Seguí. Then he added: 'I am a fanatic for action, for revolution. I have a greater belief in actions than in distant ideologies and abstract questions. I am an admirer of the Russian revolution because it is a reality. I am a supporter of the Third International, because it is a reality, because it stands above ideologies; it represents a principle of action, a principle of the co-existence of all genuinely revolutionary forces which are striving to introduce communism immediately'. He

178 *Memoria* 1932, pp. 355–67.

179 *Memoria* 1932, pp. 367–72.

180 *Memoria* 1932, p. 373.

181 *Memoria* 1932, pp. 373–4.

had proclaimed his departure from the Socialist party because it had decided to remain in the Second International.¹⁸² Leaving aside his personal situation, Nin probably formulated the basic position of the overwhelming majority of CNT members with his emphatic statement of commitment to the revolutionary deed which the Bolsheviks had performed, which meant that they should be supported despite specific ideological differences. As a result of this decision to join the Third International, the National Committee of the CNT made a variety of attempts to dispatch delegates to Russia in subsequent months. They did not succeed until summer 1920, when Angel Pestaña took part in the Second Congress of the Comintern and helped to set up the International Trade Union Council.

In Italy too, the mood of the syndicalists was similar, although here the initial situation was somewhat different. The USI, which had arisen in 1912 by splitting off from the socialist CGL, was a minority tendency.¹⁸³ Moreover, it was confronted with a Socialist Party which had declared its intention to join the Third International, and the CGL leadership had followed in its footsteps, because of the close connection between the party and the trade unions. At the end of 1919, the CGL had 1.5 million members, while the USI had only 300,500. The real balance of forces was different, however, as the Italian historian Antonioli has remarked: 'The latter [the USI] was present in sufficient strength in key sectors and locations ... The leaders of the Confederazione [the CGL] clearly feared more than anything else the political role played by the USI ... which exceeded its numerical strength in periods of particular agitation'.¹⁸⁴

182 The Socialist Party had reached this decision by a narrow majority at its congress a few days earlier. See Meaker 1974, pp. 226–33.

183 On this in general, see Charles Lloyd Bertrand, 'Revolutionary Syndicalism in Italy, 1912–1922', PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 1969. Two organisations can be ignored here, since they are not part of the story. The *Unione Italiana del Lavoro* (UIL), which was also formally syndicalist, had emerged from the group of supporters of Italy's participation in the First World War which split from the CGL in 1915 and took part both in the Leeds conference of 1916 and the Berne conference of 1918. A considerable section of the UIL went over to the Fascists in 1919. The Union of Railwaymen was a co-founder of the USI, but it had already left that organisation by 1913, and it had no international policies.

184 Antonioli 1990, pp. 61–2. In summer 1920, the General Secretary of the USI, Armando Borghi, gave the following membership figures: 1,000,000 for the CGL – which is certainly too low – and 300,000 for the USI. He commented as follows: 'But we have the advantage of being a *revolutionary minority*'. ('Bericht des Delegierten der Unione Sindacale Italiano, Armand [sic!] Borghi, an das Exekutivkomitee der Kommunistischen Internationale', in *Berichte zum Zweiten Kongress* 1921, pp. 126–38, here p. 137).

During the war, the USI had been in close contact with the minority in the CGT and it had declared its support for the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences.¹⁸⁵ After the February Revolution had taken place in Russia, the USI criticised Kerensky's policies and defended the Bolsheviks against the 'campaign of slander'. 'Lenin and his comrades are socialists, who have never signed up to the pact of national unity', wrote General Secretary Borghi on 1 May 1917 in the USI organ *La guerra di classe*.¹⁸⁶ It was logical that he also denounced the attempts that were being made to revive the Second International and the IFTU, demanding instead 'international unity' or an 'international of internationalists' on the lines of the First International or the Second International in its early days, before the congresses of Zürich and London.

When the news that the Comintern had been set up reached Italy, the USI, at a meeting of its General Council held in Bologna between 24–26 June 1919, decided to join it, referring to the statement in the Comintern's Platform that it was a bloc of all revolutionaries who support Soviet power.¹⁸⁷ The USI explicitly noted that its decision to join the Comintern was part of its opposition to the congress for the restoration of the IFTU which was scheduled to take place in Amsterdam the following month, the congress where the 'traitors to the International' would gather together.¹⁸⁸ The decision to join was unanimously confirmed at the third congress of the USI, held in Parma, 20–22 December 1919.¹⁸⁹ This congress also examined the question of the Soviets (Councils) in detail and the possibility of establishing similar bodies in Italy, something that, unlike entry into the Comintern, was not entirely undisputed.¹⁹⁰

The USI did not attach any significance to the entry of the Socialist Party into the Third International, which had already taken place. It accused the PSI, and in particular the trade unionists of the CGL, of indulging in merely verbal radicalism while making concessions to the reformists, but it repeatedly tried to propose unity of action, which the CGL countered by demanding the

185 See Antonioli 1990, pp. 33–9. Articles from the USI's newspaper are also printed in Antonioli 1990, pp. 219–40.

186 Antonioli 1990, pp. 243–4.

187 See the extract from the USI's resolution printed in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1921, p. 238.

188 See the article on joining the Comintern printed in the USI's newspaper on 5 July 1919 and reproduced in Antonioli 1990, pp. 241–2. Borghi also gave a detailed explanation of the decision in *La Vie ouvrière*, no. 30, 28 November 1919. (See also Falco 1992, p. 129).

189 *Berichte zum Zweiten Kongress* 1921, p. 135.

190 Antonioli 1990, pp. 167–70.

absorption of the syndicalists.¹⁹¹ There were, of course, various tendencies within the PSI which claimed to be 'more authentically communist' than the party leadership. But there were also great differences between the USI and the tendency around Amadeo Bordiga, which was particularly favoured by the Comintern leadership at this time, since the attitude of the latter was strongly anti-syndicalist, and conversely was criticised by Borghi for its 'centralism'.¹⁹²

The development of the *Unione Anarchica Italiana* (UAI) was more important for the USI than what was happening in the Socialist Party. The UAI was an association of Anarchists which was separate from the USI, though many members were simultaneously members of that organisation – above all, Borghi himself. The Bolsheviks had many supporters within the UAI, although there was also a group strongly opposed to them, whose spokesman was Errico Malatesta. It was not by chance that this wing of the organisation represented the 'pure' anarchist tendency, critical of syndicalism. For them, the rule of the Bolsheviks was based on Marxist principles which were therefore anti-libertarian.¹⁹³

The USI's decision to join the Comintern was communicated to it in a letter which was, as the letter itself stated, exposed to 'all the contingencies of the international postal service'. The case of the USI was officially discussed by the ECCI at the end of April 1920. But a decision on admission was postponed for the moment. It was felt that more detailed information was needed. Above all, the socialists had to be taken into account, and they had to be asked what their position was. The ECCI decided that the most they could do was send a 'spe-

191 Antonioli 1990, pp. 57–66 and 245–53; Falco 1992, pp. 108–14. See also Borghi's report to the Second Comintern Congress (*Berichte zum Zweiten Kongress* 1921, pp. 126–38).

192 See Antonioli 1990, pp. 63–4 and 258–61, where an article in which Borghi attacks Bordiga is reproduced. (See also Falco 1992, pp. 114–15 and 129–31).

193 As early as April 1919, the UAI complained at a conference that it had not been one of the organisations invited to the founding congress of the Comintern, saying that if the Comintern really wanted to continue the tradition of the First International it should propose its admission (König p. 214). See Antonioli 1990, pp. 81–3, on the discussion at the UAI Congress at the beginning of July 1920. These differences were a continuation of the disagreements that had broken out during the war, when Malatesta had presented these same arguments to the USI in regard to participation in the Zimmerwald movement and the Stockholm conference planned for the summer of 1917. See the correspondence between Malatesta and Borghi printed in the USI newspaper on 16 November 1917 and reproduced in Antonioli 1990, pp. 227–34. For an extensive presentation of the discussions in the Italian anarchist groups over Russia, which also takes into account the anarchists' links with the USI, see Fedele 1996.

cially comradely letter' to the USI in reply.¹⁹⁴ In fact the Comintern felt that the situation in Italy was very confused. There was the PSI, with its 'maximalist' leadership, dragging along the CGL leadership as well, although the latter tended more towards reformism. There were, in addition, two communist factions within the party (one around *Ordine Nuovo* – led by Gramsci and Togliatti – in Turin, the other around *Il Soviet* – led by Bordiga – in Naples). The Comintern leadership manoeuvred between these various forces. It was evident that the Syndicalists could be useful in this process. The Socialist delegation to the Second Comintern Congress arrived in Russia in June 1920, and the spokesman of the maximalist party leadership, Serrati, told an ECCI session held soon afterwards (19 June) that he would not tolerate any negotiations with the USI.¹⁹⁵ The Comintern then invited the General Secretary of the USI, Borghi, to Moscow, but he did not set off until 22 July, when the Second Congress was already in session, and as a result he arrived after it had ended. The USI was, however, admitted immediately to the Comintern, at a sitting of the ECCI on 25 August, as another Italian section, though it had to fulfil certain conditions.¹⁹⁶ It was clear to everyone that this would happen in view of the open differences of opinion between the PSI and the Comintern's leaders which surfaced at the Second Congress. There were problems for Borghi as well, however, as was to be shown when he participated in the sessions of the International Trade Union Council.

In the English-speaking countries, there were 'industrialist' organisations which did not explicitly see themselves as syndicalist, but were largely in agreement with the syndicalists in their insistence on the exclusively economic struggle and the need to establish revolutionary factory organisations ('unions') in connection with this struggle. Their development at this time followed roughly the same pattern as that of the 'classical' syndicalist currents and organisations discussed above, even if they (unlike the syndicalists) had not grown out of a relatively long trade-union tradition.

194 'Sitzungen des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 10, 1921, pp. 237–40.

195 König 1967, p. 88. Some days later, Serrati put his oral report in writing and placed it at the disposal of *Die Kommunistische Internationale* for printing. But the editorial board produced a version in which Serrati's political objections were 'softened'. The passage about the USI now became relatively anodyne: it 'did not have the masses behind it'. (See G. Serrati, 'Die sozialistische Bewegung in Italien (Bericht an das Exekutivkomitee der Kommunistischen Internationale)', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 12, 1920, pp. 176–80).

196 The decision to admit the USI is printed in М.К., 'Der erste Monat der Arbeit. Kurzer Bericht', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, pp. 271–6, here p. 273.

In the United States, the Industrial Workers of the World had fallen victim since summer 1917 to severe repressive measures imposed by the Wilson administration, with the open support of the AFL leadership.¹⁹⁷ They immediately welcomed the Bolshevik revolution, just as the European syndicalists had done. A good example of the attitude of the 'Wobblies', as they were popularly known, was their meeting with actual living Bolsheviks in Seattle at the end of 1917. Seattle was a place where a big expansion of production during the war had been conducive to a high level of radicalisation. In 1919, it was the scene of a militant general strike,¹⁹⁸ and its AFL trade-union branch would eventually send a delegate to the founding congress of the RILU. A Russian freighter from Vladivostok landed in Seattle on 27 December; during the journey, the captain of the vessel had apparently been deprived of his authority by a Sailors' Council. The rumour spread that the ship was bringing gold and weapons for a Bolshevik uprising. It turned out that the real cargo consisted of various agricultural products. While these were being unloaded, the sailors made contact with the workers' organisations of the region, and they stayed in contact until 8 January when the ship sailed back to Russia.¹⁹⁹ The Seattle IWW handed over to them an open letter addressed to Lenin, and, via him, to the workers of Russia, in which they gave a detailed report on the situation in the USA and the persecution of the IWW, denounced the attitude of the AFL and declared their solidarity with the Bolsheviks. 'Your struggle ... is our struggle, your victory is our victory', the letter read in part. But this letter, which was brought across the Pacific to Vladivostok in a Russian ship, never reached its addressee. It was printed in only one newspaper, the Vladivostok 'Krasnoe Znamia', in March 1918, after the ship had returned home.²⁰⁰ The Tacoma IWW sent a similar message.²⁰¹ But the Seattle Central Labor Council – an integral part of the AFL – also greeted the Russian sailors and handed a message to them.²⁰²

197 Practically the whole leading group of the IWW was arrested, including some people who had pulled out of active union work long before. From April to August 1918, there was a show trial in Chicago against more than a hundred defendants, who were condemned to long prison sentences (though they were later reprieved). This case was then followed by trials in other regions during the rest of 1918. (On these events, see Renshaw 1967, pp. 215–42; Dubofsky 1969, pp. 398–444; and Foner 1987, pp. 292–314).

198 For the background, see Friedheim and Friedheim 1964, pp. 146–56, and Frank 1994.

199 LeWarne 1978, pp. 107–22.

200 Mukhachev 1965, pp. 122–8.

201 Printed in Foner 1967, pp. 65–6.

202 Foner 1967, p. 65. Part of this message reads as follows: '[W]e make no effort nor have we any desire to address ourselves exclusively to any one faction, but we extend to all factions

In fact, at the beginning there was practically complete identification with the Bolsheviks. The organ of the IWW leadership, which was appearing at that time under the title 'Defense News Bulletin', wrote in its 8 December 1917 issue: '[I]n broad essentials, the now famous Bolsheviks stand for ... the same thing in Russia as our IWW stands for in America'. And a month later, the IWW's Seattle newspaper announced: 'The trend of events in Russia sustains the IWW contention that the power of the workers lies in industry and in their unions on the economic field. None but actual producers can function there, and the laws that are passed in the union hall have behind them the strength of the organised toilers'.²⁰³

The way the Wobblies pictured Russia at this time is displayed very clearly in a pamphlet written in December 1917 by one of the defendants in the Chicago trial, Harrison George, on the basis of information provided by a fellow prisoner who had previously been active in the Russian revolutionary movement. This came out in February 1918 as an official publication of the IWW under the title 'The Red Dawn. The Bolsheviks and the I.W.W.'. It was distributed in thousands of copies, until they stopped selling it in 1920, when anti-Bolshevik forces started to gain strength in the organisation.²⁰⁴ The pamphlet contained a *tour d'horizon* of the political forces active in Russia. It condemned the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries and praised the Bolsheviks, who despite their social-democratic roots were on the way to realising the 'industrial state' and 'industrial democracy', and thus were going in the same direction as the IWW. To be sure, the Wobblies were well aware that the Bolsheviks did not restrict themselves to 'economic action' but had turned the class struggle into a political struggle for power. However, they forgave them for this because of the external circumstances they had to confront.²⁰⁵ At the beginning of 1919, John Sandgren, who would a year later be a controversial figure because of his fierce attacks on the Bolsheviks, expressed the hope, in the central press organ of the IWW, that they might yet change and develop, and move towards empowering the trade unions to take over running society as a whole in Russia.²⁰⁶

of workers alike our hearty good will, firm in the belief that in the end (which we trust is not far off) the rule of the workers will be absolute'.

203 Both of these quotations come from Foner 1988, p. 57.

204 Foner 1967, p. 59. There is an extract from the pamphlet in Foner 1967, p. 60. See also Draper 1957, p. 110.

205 On this point, see the quotations from the Wobbly press at the beginning of 1918 printed in Foner 1988, pp. 57–8.

206 John Sandgren, 'Russian Constitution Compared with U.S. Bolsheviks. Form of Constitution Not Similar to I.W.W.', *New Solidarity*, no. 12, 1 February 1919.

Some members of the IWW, however, saw the Bolshevik example as a successful model, and a reason for rethinking their own ideas. Direct action could not remain restricted to the economic sphere if the capitalist state had recourse to measures of repression. George Hardy, one of the accused in the Chicago trial, argued in this way when in prison, and he composed a manuscript giving his reasons.²⁰⁷ The charismatic leader of the IWW, William ('Big Bill') Haywood, who was a fellow prisoner, said he agreed with this 'political' argument, but warned Hardy that it would arouse sharp controversy.²⁰⁸ The IWW's leadership, the General Executive Board (GEB), removed from the manuscript, which had been smuggled out of jail, all of Hardy's remarks on the state, on political strikes, and so on. It was then published as an 'Appeal to the American Workers', a call to continue the struggle for the general aims of the Wobblies. This pamphlet had a print run of 100,000 copies, and turned out to be extraordinarily popular. It showed that the repression had by no means been able to eliminate the group.

The IWW (both in the USA and in a number of other countries) was one of the 39 organisations mentioned by name in the invitation to the First Congress of the Communist International. The invitation did not reach the IWW directly, but rather through the roundabout route of its publication in a newspaper published by the left wing of the American Socialist Party (which developed into the Communist Party half a year later), and at a time when the congress had already taken place. The IWW press reprinted the invitation and commented on it in a reserved manner. The conception of the new society developed in the Comintern's document did not involve the taking over of the economy by revolutionary industrial trade unions. The communists wanted to retain the old political state in a changed form, even if only 'in part'. It was therefore no surprise that revolutionary forces such as many of the syndicalist organisations in Europe, the anarchists and others were absent from the list of invitees. The IWW wished the congress all the best, but said 'we have no reason to be particularly excited by this invitation. The programme of the IWW was good before the war, it survived the war without the need to alter a single point, and it will with absolute inevitability be the programme of any revolutionary party'. This was the very self-confident response of the IWW's theoretical organ.²⁰⁹

207 Hardy 1956, p. 120.

208 On Haywood's enthusiastic attitude towards the Bolsheviks, see 'A Letter from "Big Bill"', *New Solidarity*, no. 3, 30 November 1918.

209 'The Proposed Communist Congress', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 2, April 1919, pp. 5–6. Similar comments were made in the weekly *New Solidarity*, no. 18, 15 March 1919.

When the texts of the First Congress, with their stress on the rule of the Soviets, which must follow the overthrow of the bourgeois state, reached the USA, the reaction of the IWW became more favourable. The Comintern's programme of the dictatorship of the proletariat was the same as the aim of the IWW, they now said.²¹⁰ The supporters of the Russian Revolution in the USA, the IWW said, must now join their organisation. This was clearly meant to refer to the future communists of the left wing of the Socialist Party. The leadership of the IWW now decided to send a delegate to the next congress of the Comintern. The manifesto issued by the First Comintern Congress was published by the IWW journal, which declared, as if in apology, that while the manifesto talked a lot about politics, this was because of the situation in Europe. In America, on the other hand, the only opponent was private capital.²¹¹

In August, the General Executive Board of the IWW made an official decision on its relationship to the Third International: '[T]he IWW ... is the logical American unit of the Third International ... [T]he time has come for the IWW to assume its proper place as the American unit of the Workers' Red International, and to establish closer relations with groups of the same or similar principles in every country'. The communists of Russia, Hungary and Bavaria, as well as the Spartacists, the syndicalists of France, Italy and Great Britain and the industrial unionists of Canada and Australia were then indicated as groups of this kind. A committee on international relations was to be created, to establish and maintain contact with all these groups, and to 'provide for the representation of the IWW as a constituent member of the Third International'.²¹² But this resolution was not made public immediately. When George Hardy, who had been released in summer 1919, returned to America in May 1920 from a stay in Britain, he started to work at the headquarters of the IWW executive on preparing its report to the impending conference. On going through the organisation's resolutions, he found this resolution on affiliating to the Communist International, which had been 'adopted unanimously. The matter had never been discussed in the IWW journals ... and it seemed certain to provoke sharp controversy at the convention'.²¹³ There had in fact been a short notice about this in the IWW's monthly journal at the beginning of 1920, which also throws light on a possible reason

210 Irving Freeman, 'The Communist International and the I.W.W.', *New Solidarity*, no. 31, 14 June 1919.

211 'Manifesto issued by the Third International', *New Solidarity*, no. 40, 16 August 1919.

212 'Resolution of I.W.W.', *Solidarity*, no. 24 (95), 21 August 1920. [Also printed in Foner 1988, p. 231].

213 Hardy 1956, p. 129.

for keeping the resolution secret. In a retrospective look at the activities of the GEB in the past year, the comment was made that it had accepted 'a recommendation to join the Third International ... [but] this had never been voted by a conference'. The Comintern was essentially a political international, even if it more or less supported the 'movement for industrial unions'. Moreover, a 'purely industrial international' would possibly develop in the near future from the movement's international contacts.²¹⁴ In such a conception, joining the Comintern would only be a tactically necessary step towards a true international. It was therefore not something that should be shouted from the rooftops.

Another reason for the IWW's initial reticence was perhaps the repressive political climate in the postwar USA. This was coming to a climax with the 'Palmer raids' on 'suspicious foreigners', followed by their deportation. One final possible reason was tactical: it was perhaps a way of outmanoeuvring the other declared supporters of the Third International, the left-wing socialists. Whatever the explanation, the text of the resolution was not published until August 1920, shortly after a letter from the Comintern to the IWW – which had already been composed at the beginning of 1920 – became known.²¹⁵ The IWW's behaviour had a curious consequence: the Comintern had no idea that the organisation had joined it. The Comintern's letter to the IWW was therefore entirely devoted to gaining it as a member, despite all the differences of approach enumerated there. Hence, when the ECCI reported on its activities to the Second World Congress, its list of syndicalist organisations that had joined the Comintern included the CNT, the USI and the British Shop Stewards, and not the IWW.²¹⁶

As already indicated in the GEB's resolution on joining the Third International, the IWW was now pursuing several international orientations at once. Simultaneously with its membership of the Comintern, it approached groupings outside the Comintern or on its periphery which were committed to the creation of revolutionary industrial unions, with the aim of establishing a 'purely industrial international'. In line with this, the IWW followed with interest the attempt of the European syndicalists to hold a conference in Amsterdam in August 1919 (although, as we shall see below, this conference did not in fact take place). It did not choose a delegate to attend the conference, but it

214 'I.W.W. 1919', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 1 (11), January 1920, pp. 5–11, here p. 6.

215 See note 60. The content of this letter from the Comintern and its impact on the IWW will be discussed below.

216 See the 'List of the member Organisations of the Third International', in Sinowjew 1920, pp. 71–2.

did send a telegram promising cooperation.²¹⁷ At the end of October, it sent a manifesto of solidarity to the syndicalist federations and unions which were becoming active in Germany.²¹⁸ And it also endeavoured to gain a foothold in some International Trade Secretariats, in part by reaching agreements with other syndicalist organisations.²¹⁹

There was particularly close co-operation between the IWW and the British Shop Stewards' Movement, because this was based on jointly held principles of revolutionary 'industrial action'. George Hardy was sent to Britain in September 1919 to establish a connection with the Shop Stewards, as well as to organise action in solidarity with the IWW prisoners held in American gaols. He took part in the Shop Stewards' congress of January 1920, which voted in favour of close relations with the IWW.²²⁰ Last but not least, there were close relations between the American IWW and the other 'directly' IWW groups, the 'foreign administrations' located in Australia and South America, as well as the Canadian organisation called One Big Union, although disputes soon broke out with the latter.²²¹

217 'The International Syndicalist Congress Postponed', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 9, November 1919, p. 39.

218 'The I.W.W. Makes Its Entry Into the Labor Movement of Germany', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 10, December 1919, pp. 29–30.

219 This applied in particular to the ITF, because of the strength of the IWW seamen's organisation, the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union (MTWIU). The syndicalist union of transport workers in the Netherlands, which was attached to the NAS, also played a part in the revival of the ITF after the war. (See *Protokoll der Internationalen Transportarbeiter-Konferenz in Amsterdam (29 bis 30. April 1919)*, Amsterdam, 1919). It was intended that George Hardy would take part in the ITF congress in Christiania (Oslo), but he was unable to travel owing to passport difficulties (Hardy 1956, p. 127). Some MTWIU representatives did manage to get there, and they were admitted to the congress after some discussion (see *Bericht über den am 15., 16., 17., 18 und 19. März 1920 in Christiania abgehaltenen Transportarbeiterkongress*, Amsterdam, 1920, pp. 8, 16). Later on, the MTWIU tried to set up its own revolutionary seamen's international. An IWW representative was also present at the founding conference of the International Union of Food and Drink Workers (IUF) in October 1920 in Zürich, although this did not lead to anything. (See *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des internationalen Kongresses der Lebensmittel-Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen, Zürich, 25. bis 27. August 1920*, p. 2).

220 'The Shop Stewards Movement and the I.W.W.', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 4 (14), April 1920, p. 7. See also Hardy 1956, pp. 126–7.

221 There are some references to international contacts in 'Report of the General Executive Board of the I.W.W. to the Twelfth Annual Convention', *Solidarity*, no. 10 (80), 15 May 1920. On the international diffusion of the IWW, see Renshaw 1967, pp. 275–93.

In October 1919, when the invitation of the Russian trade-union leadership to 'all the workers of Europe and America' reached the IWW, it seemed that all the problems that had prevented them from working with Bolsheviks in a *political* international had thereby been eliminated. In this invitation, all trade unions which stood for the dictatorship of the proletariat were asked to enter into contact with the Russian trade unions for the purpose of organising an international conference.²²² It is characteristic of the difficulties of communication at that time that the IWW first heard about this indirectly through *La Vie Ouvrière* at the beginning of 1920. The invitation was now published in the IWW monthly journal, along with an article by George Andreytchine, who commented enthusiastically on this new route towards an 'industrial international'. The USI, the CNT and the syndicalists of France and Scandinavia had announced their entry into the Comintern in spite of their reservations about the membership of political parties. 'Now this objection, or rather excuse, has been removed, and we hope that there will be no obstacle to achieving an agreement in the name of international working-class solidarity. We are certain that our organisation will be there as well.'²²³ Two months later (in the intervening time there had clearly been intensive discussions on this), the IWW returned to the issue in an unsigned article.²²⁴ Referring to the resolution of the previous year on joining the Comintern, the article explained the reservations the IWW had had at the time. This invitation by the Russian trade unions, which it printed once again, was now 'a call for an industrial international', which 'we can describe as the Fourth International'. The invitation was directed exclusively at trade-union organisations. No political parties were invited. Under these conditions, the IWW was ready to join. But it still had some reservations. There was no indication in the invitation of what the dictatorship of the proletariat would really signify. If it meant the taking over of power by the industrial unions, they were in agreement. But if it meant a takeover by politicians, they rejected that view of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The kind of dictatorship that would be carried out by the leaders of American communism if they seized power was explicitly described by the IWW as the kind of dictatorship that they did not want.

This brought up a problem that was to have increasing significance for the IWW: their rivalry with the American communists. At the end of August and

²²² See section 1 above, note 58.

²²³ 'Call for Proletarian International', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 2 (12), February 1920, p. 5. This issue also contains on pp. 6–7 the appeal made in July 1919 by the VTsSPS to the workers of the Entente countries.

²²⁴ 'An Industrial International', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 4 (14), April 1920, pp. 5–6.

the beginning of September 1919, when the left wing failed to seize control of the Socialist Party, two American communist parties came into existence simultaneously, the Communist Party and the Communist Labor Party. It is not possible to go into more detail here on the reasons for the split and the various attempts at reunification, which eventually succeeded,²²⁵ but it should be stressed that both parties were resolutely opposed to any activities within the AFL, which was attacked as a more or less 'yellow union'. On the other hand, both parties, though with different nuances, preferred the IWW, because they saw it as a revolutionary trade union.

But the communists now started to claim leadership over the Wobblies. The latter defended themselves strongly against such impertinence. Their central organ, *New Solidarity*, made this emphatic assertion in a leading article: 'The IWW is revolutionary – the IWW is communist ... It is the only communist organisation in the USA'. To be sure, the IWW admired the courage of communist party members in the face of repression. But the organisation would have nothing to do with parties or sects. The IWW did not see how the activities of the two communist parties could promote the triumph of communism.²²⁶ They were ready, however, to allow communist party members to join their organisation. This was explicitly confirmed in a commentary on the (first) unification congress of the communists, held in May 1920, and the IWW also offered its support against the AFL. The article expressed the hope that once they had entered the IWW, the communists would adopt its views.²²⁷ At the same time, the communist claim to have the correct political strategy was vehemently rejected. Fraina could not fail to notice this, since his reports in the communist press on the Amsterdam conference of the Comintern called forth from the IWW comments like 'Soviet maniac' and 'your trade union programme is a deception'. The IWW also rehashed rumours that Fraina was a police spy.²²⁸

In May 1920, the IWW held its 12th Annual Convention, but the question of its international orientation did not call forth much discussion there. The resolution of August 1919 to join the Comintern was mentioned, and George

225 On this subject Draper (1956) continues to be the authoritative treatment.

226 Editorial, *New Solidarity*, no. 12 (64), 21 January 1920.

227 'Communist – Communist Labor – United Communist Party', *Solidarity*, no. 18 (88), 10 July 1920. See Draper (1956, pp. 218–22) on this congress. Draper omits any reference to the objection made by one of the party leaders, Cannon, himself a former IWW organiser, to the communists' exclusive orientation towards the IWW. But Cannon remained in the minority on this issue (see Cannon 1992, pp. 71–2).

228 John Sandgren, 'International Impostors', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 7 (17), July 1920, pp. 45–8.

Hardy, who was elected shortly afterwards to the post of General Secretary, was astonished that there was no reaction to this: 'No-one said a word. I stated once, and then again, that the matter was of the greatest importance. There was still no reaction. The question was never mentioned again, and the motion to enter the Comintern was accepted along with the unanimous vote in support of the report of the executive'.²²⁹

In any case, the relationship with the Comintern was only one of the international matters dealt with at this conference. The connections with the British Shop Stewards were also confirmed. The main aim was to call an 'international industrial conference'. Whatever happened, delegates would definitely be sent to Moscow.²³⁰

At this time, there was clearly no direct communication with the Comintern. There was, however, some correspondence with the Amsterdam Bureau. This invited the IWW in a letter of 23 April to a conference at the end of June in Christiania (Oslo). The IWW agreed, but it then received a further letter in the middle of June from Amsterdam saying that this conference had already taken place, with Italian, Norwegian, Dutch and Swedish participation. Soon afterwards, however, the Second Comintern Congress was held, and the IWW was invited to send delegates. Again it agreed.²³¹ At the end of July, the IWW newspaper printed the report of a Chicago journalist who had visited the Soviet republic, without any commentary, and therefore clearly with approval. It also contained an interview with Zinoviev, in which the latter expressed his regret that the Comintern had not yet had any official contact with the IWW. He also mentioned the Comintern's letter, which the IWW had still not received. He was, however, optimistic: 'It will not be long before the IWW is united with the communist movement'.²³²

229 Hardy 1956, pp. 129–30. In its report, the executive of the IWW explained the decision to enter the Comintern in this way: 'The executive believed that to the extent that the Third International was the only workers' international in history not to adopt weak and mild parliamentary programmes, we ought to give our support to it as opposed to the Second International, particularly because we were convinced that our colleagues in Russia have only maintained the political character of the first Soviet government in order to win power and to keep hold of it temporarily during the period of transition from capitalism to industrial communism' (*Solidarity*, no. 33 (103), 23 October 1920).

230 See Gordon Cascaden, 'Industrial Union Force Prepares for Joint Action', *Solidarity*, no. 11 (81), 22 May 1920; and 'The 12th Annual Convention of the I.W.W.', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 6 (16), June 1920, pp. 49–55.

231 The correspondence is printed in *Solidarity*, no. 24 (94), 21 August 1920. No further details on the conference in Christiania could be discovered.

232 'Moscow Moves to Unite Reds for U.S. Revolt', *Solidarity*, no. 17 (87), 3 July 1920.

As it turned out, no delegate from the IWW was actually sent to the Second Congress. This was not, says Foner, 'because of any ideological differences. Rather, it was because of the difficulties facing the organisation at home and the problems of travel'.²³³ The IWW was not officially present in summer 1920 in Moscow at the Second World Congress of the Comintern, nor was it at the discussion on the establishment of an International Trade Union Council. It was not the only syndicalist organisation not to attend, but it was certainly the most important one.

In the middle of August, after the Moscow discussions had already come to an end, the IWW's weekly organ was finally able to publish the Comintern's letter, with the comment that it had only just arrived.²³⁴ After this, the discussion on the IWW's relationship to Moscow finally got going. It was made more acrimonious by conflicts within the organisation. (See chapter 3, section 6, for the further development of this discussion).

The British Shop Stewards' movement was distinguished from all the other syndicalist organisations by the fact that from the beginning it did not have a definite membership.²³⁵ It arose from the association of groups of factory shop stewards of individual trade unions (above all the Amalgamated Society of Engineers in the metalworking trades), although it can be shown that long years of syndicalist agitation ultimately lay behind the movement. The world war led to radicalisation. Militant shop stewards joined together in regional

233 Foner 1988, p. 232. There were, however, a number of unofficial IWW visitors to Russia, as we shall indicate later. The Bolsheviks were very interested in these people, as is shown by an anecdotal report from the first secretary of the Comintern, Berzin, who in 1930 described a meeting between Lenin and a visitor of this type in the winter of 1919–20 (Ia. Berzin, 'Po povodu odnoi potrepannoi knigi [Iz vospominanii o Lenine]', *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia*, no. 1 (96), 1930, pp. 68–71).

234 'The Third International Appeals to the I.W.W.', *Solidarity*, no. 23 (93), 14 August 1920.

235 See Kendall 1969, Hinton 1973, and Streiter 1982 for detailed discussions of the Shop Stewards' Movement. These works also refer to the traditions from which the movement originated in the First World War. British social historians have long been engaged in a wide-ranging discussion on the dynamics and background of the emergence of the Shop Stewards' Movement during the war. The main controversy is over how far this was a movement of skilled workers responding to the threat to their privileges presented by wartime developments, a movement therefore with a far from revolutionary character (a view summarised in the phrase 'the myth of red Clydeside'). Without going into this question any further, it should be pointed out that we are concerned here only with the activists of the movement, who indubitably belonged to the revolutionary left. They tried to keep the movement going after the war had ended, and they finally gave their allegiance to communism.

committees, among which the Clyde Workers' Committee in the Glasgow area and the Sheffield Workers' Committee should be mentioned in particular. They were often members of socialist or syndicalist groupings, which strongly opposed the official policies of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. They did not call for withdrawal from the existing trade unions ('dual unionism'); instead they saw themselves as a movement at the grass roots of the trade unions (a movement of the 'rank and file') with the aim of transforming them from 'craft unions' into revolutionary industrial unions. They arose entirely independently of the Russian Revolution, although later on they began to see the Committees as the germ cells of British soviets.

Since 1916 there had been regular conferences, and in August 1917 a leading body, the National Administrative Council, was set up to co-ordinate the movement. But the end of the war brought about a critical situation. As a movement of economic protest, the movement lost ground to the trade unions, and the trade unions themselves adopted a system of shop stewards. The original Shop Stewards' Movement increasingly regarded itself as the instrument of revolution in Great Britain, in line with the Bolshevik model. At the same time, discussions began between the various tendencies of the British revolutionary left, of which the Shop Stewards' Movement was only one part, on the way to create a British communist party.

It was a sign of the identity crisis that had struck the movement that its first postwar conference did not meet until 10–11 January 1920, in London.²³⁶ Its main concern was the question of how to co-ordinate oppositional activities within the trade unions. But there was also a resolution on joining the Communist International, and the conference voted to instruct the National Administrative Council to send delegates to Moscow.

All the above-mentioned organisations saw the Russian Revolution as the realisation of syndicalist principles, though with reservations of one kind or another. They therefore initially had a positive attitude towards the Bolsheviks, and drew the conclusion that they should enter the Communist International. At the same time, however, a rival pole of attraction emerged, embodied by the German syndicalist organisation, the *Freie Arbeiterunion Deutschlands* [Free Workers' Union of Germany] (FAUD).

German syndicalism originally derived from an oppositional current within the Social Democrat-led trade-union movement.²³⁷ After 1890, when the General Commission was formed, a minority of 'localists', who advocated strictly

236 See Streiter 1982, pp. 108–19, on this point.

237 On the FAUD and its predecessors, see Bock 1993; Rübner 1994; and Klan and Nelles 1990.

political trade unions (which because of the law governing associations would have to be organised on a local basis), refused to subordinate themselves to it, founding instead the *Freie Vereinigung der deutschen Gewerkschaften* [Free Association of German Trade Unions] (FVdG). After 1905, the General Commission compelled the SPD leadership to forbid Social Democrats from having anything to do with the FVdG. As a result, the latter had already come under anarcho-syndicalist influence before the war broke out, and it took part in the discussions of those who wanted to create a revolutionary alternative to the International Secretariat.

After the end of the war, and during the first few months of the German revolution, the FVdG experienced a big expansion. In many places there were joint actions participated in by syndicalists, communists and USPD leftists. Dual membership with the FVdG was not unusual at this time, particularly among new recruits to the cause who had just been radicalised by the 1918 revolution. Some spokesmen of the Free Association talked for a while about the need for a dictatorship of the proletariat. This *rapprochement* with communism was no doubt based on the 'ultra-left' course followed by the youthful communist movement in Germany. As we saw earlier, the KPD voted to reject participation in elections at its founding congress, and it was pursuing a very ambiguous course with regard to the trade-union question during 1919. It therefore looked as if the old political differences between syndicalists and Marxists no longer had any significance. This period of co-operation culminated with the merger of the syndicalists of Rhineland-Westphalia with the communist 'Unions', particularly the Union of Mineworkers, to form the *Freie Arbeiter-Union* [Free Workers' Union] (FAU) in September 1919.

But a counter-movement had already set in. The immediate impulse for this was given by the strongly anti-syndicalist turn taken by the *Levi Zentrale* of the KPD from the spring of 1919. At the same time, the FVdG gained an outstanding spokesman in the shape of Rudolf Rocker, who decisively stamped the movement with an anarcho-syndicalist identity.²³⁸ Born in 1873, he joined the SPD when he was a bookbinder's apprentice in Mainz, and came under the influence of the leftist opposition movement of the 'Young Ones' [*Die Jungen*] at the beginning of the 1890s. He was forced out of the party along with them, came under anarchist influence and finally had to leave Germany. He found a new home in the East End of London. Although not Jewish, he learned Yiddish and attached himself to the local Anarchists, who were organising the immigrant

238 See Wienand (1981) as well as the autobiography of Rudolf Rocker (1974), the published version of which has, unfortunately, been severely cut.

clothing workers from Eastern Europe who toiled in 'sweatshops' under indescribable working conditions. Rocker quickly acquired a big reputation as an organiser. When the war broke out, he opposed it, and he was interned as a 'hostile foreigner' for this reason, although the Prussian government had long since deprived him of his citizenship. The Russian Revolution gave him great hope. Originally the Bolsheviks attempted to bring him over to Russia, but the British government would not let him go, as he wasn't a Russian. Finally, in the spring of 1918, he succeeded in getting deported to the Netherlands, where he engaged in extensive discussions with the Dutch anarchist veteran Domela Nieuwenhuis, until the fall of the Kaiser, which allowed him to return to Germany at the end of the year. Immediately after arriving in Berlin, he entered into a close association with the FVdG. Although he never had an official position in that organisation, he quickly became one of their most important speakers. He defended them, with skill and tremendous personal involvement, in numerous public meetings and conferences, and he also made a great contribution to formulating their point of view. Until the war, the anarchist element in the FVdG had not been particularly prominent. The leaders of the group had been strongly moulded by their experiences as trade unionists within the framework of Social Democracy. This now changed. In 1919, Rocker was given the job of working out a new declaration of principles, which was adopted at the FVdG's 12th Conference (27–30 December 1919) without any opposing votes. Its title was also changed. It became the *Freie Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Syndikalisten)* [Free Workers' Union of Germany, Syndicalists] (FAUD).²³⁹

The model of socialism presented in the FAUD's declaration of principles envisaged a takeover of the whole economy by the trade unions, which would combine together in local and industry-wide federations and perform all necessary social tasks, which would render the state superfluous. It ruled out the 'conquest of political power', i.e. the dictatorship of the proletariat, though it was not given this name. The syndicalists, it stated, were 'opposed to all forms of state organisation'. Members of the FAUD were not explicitly forbidden to join political parties (that step was not taken until the next FAUD congress, in November 1921),²⁴⁰ but its attitude towards them was made clear by the pro-

239 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen zum 12. Kongress 1920*. See also Bock 1993, pp. 155–7; Rübner 1994, pp. 36–8; and Wienand 1981, pp. 292–3. The new title was taken over from the name adopted by the Syndicalists of Rhineland-Westphalia and the Unionists when they merged in September 1919. The Declaration of Principles is printed, along with other documentation, in Bock 1993, pp. 363–7.

240 Wienand 1981, p. 283.

nouncement that 'political parties, whatever their ideological affiliation, are never capable of carrying out the construction of socialism'.

The FAUD programme, which combined together syndicalist and anarchist positions, represents a position more clearly opposed to the views of the Bolsheviks than any other programme ever formulated by any of those organisations. The 12th FVdG conference also agreed without any discussion to hold an international conference jointly with the NAS with the purpose of founding a syndicalist international 'during 1920'.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, the FAUD still sent a delegate to Moscow in summer 1920, who took part in the Second Comintern Congress and the trade-union discussions and also gained a direct impression of the state of affairs in Russia by undertaking a long journey through the country.

The Swedish syndicalists were also very quick to articulate a similarly negative position on the rule of the Bolsheviks in Russia,²⁴² although they were not of great international significance. The Dutch, on the other hand, wavered. They had already shown by taking part in the February 1920 Amsterdam Conference that there were members of the NAS who were very sympathetic towards the Comintern; but there was also great resistance to it.²⁴³ The 'ultra-left' communist party leadership under Wijnkoop made advances to the NAS, more or less directly offering to make it the party's trade-union centre.²⁴⁴ Even this

241 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen zum 12. Kongress 1920*, p. 89.

242 See Thorpe 1989, pp. 116–17, referring to Lennard K. Persson's fundamental study of the SAC (1975). The Swedish syndicalists were also subject to sharp attacks from the local communists, who had already in September 1919 formed a tendency within the majority trade unions, which stood under Social Democratic leadership. 'We have also declared war on the petty bourgeois industrial unionism and the confused anarchism of the syndicalists. Our battle is waged against their anarchist ideology and their decentralising federalism' ('Bericht über den Verband für gewerkschaftliche Propaganda in Schweden', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921, pp. 341–5, here p. 343).

243 See Hansen and Prosper 1981, pp. 213–16; and Bultsma and Van der Tuin 1980, pp. 19–20. Indeed, in 1918–19 the NAS went so far as to set up action groups along with the Dutch trade-union centre, the NVV, which was led by Social Democrats. In this context, the question of trade-union reunification temporarily came to the surface.

244 At its founding congress in 1918, the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN) had decided that its members ought to join the NAS and not the NVV. From autumn 1920 onwards, however, the CPN leadership began to press its supporters to work in both the NAS and the NVV with the aim of unifying both bodies on a revolutionary basis. This complicated the disputes within the NAS and quickly led to a fight on three fronts between the CPN leadership, the communist majority grouping in the NAS (some of whom were also members of an oppositional minority within the communist party) and the anarcho-

approach could not alter the fact that the NAS very quickly became caught up in a dynamic of fragmentation on the question of its relation to communism.

What was the reason for these differences in the attitude of syndicalist organisations in different countries? In Thorpe's view, it was above all a matter of geography: Sweden and Germany were close to Russia and this gave them more access to information, which explains why their attitude towards Bolshevism turned critical more rapidly.²⁴⁵ That is one possible explanation. But it neglects an important and obvious factor: the rivalry between organisations. Communist parties already existed in both countries. They had emerged in the course of the war by splitting from Social Democracy; they had channels of communication with Russia and their policies acquired legitimacy from the Bolsheviks. The differences between the anarchist and Marxist traditions, which at first appeared to have been rendered obsolete by the *Soviet revolution*, later regained significance to the extent that syndicalists and communists became rivals in the task of making the working class into a revolutionary force. In France, Italy, Spain and the English-speaking countries, in contrast, the formation of communist parties was a much more complicated and protracted process. Here, the syndicalists, comparatively speaking, had a greater influence. They were in a much better position to claim that they, rather than the Bolsheviks, constituted a genuinely revolutionary force. And as a result, the Bolsheviks took them very seriously. Numerous factors, ranging from the identification between Bolshevism and syndicalism, which occupied the political foreground, and resulted more from the Bolsheviks' own presentation of themselves than the realities of the Russian Revolution,²⁴⁶ to the difficulty of gaining

syndicalist minority within the NAS. (These disputes are examined by Wiessing 1980, pp. 110–14, 120–1 and 128–9). For the impact of these disagreements on the relationship between the NAS and the Profintern, see later parts of this book.

245 Thorpe 1989, p. 116.

246 It might be claimed that in identifying Soviets (Councils) and industrial unions (or revolutionary trade unions), the revolutionary syndicalists had been taken in by a particularly cunning piece of Bolshevik propaganda. But they were not the only ones to take this view. The Mensheviks, for example, drew a similar parallel, deriving it from the rejection of representative institutions of the parliamentary type which was common to Bolsheviks and syndicalists. A Menshevik conference of April 1920 made the following declaration, directed at international Social Democracy: 'The idea of the "Soviet System" of democracy and efforts to secure Social Revolution by way of dictatorship on the basis of this system have been nourished among the working classes of different countries by syndicalistic traditions attempting to fill the transitory period from Capitalism to Socialism' ('The World's Social Revolution and the Aim of Social Democracy', printed as Appendix 6 of *British Labour Delegation to Russia 1920. Report*, London, 1920, pp. 73–9, here p. 78).

access to accurate information, the effects of competition between different organisations and accidental factors arising from the syndicalist traditions of the individual countries, with their special features and the varying reactions of particular syndicalist spokesmen, explain why, as late as the middle of 1920, it was only a minority of syndicalists who unambiguously opposed the Bolsheviks, while the vast majority still looked to Moscow, to the 'revolution of the deed' and therefore supported entry into the Comintern. Not until 1921–2 did the Moscow-oriented majority dwindle away.

Even so, the syndicalist organisations made efforts to establish independent international connections immediately after the end of the war.²⁴⁷ The Dutch repeated the appeal for an international conference they had already made during the course of the war. This was endorsed by the FVdG in December 1918, at its first postwar meeting, and the Scandinavian organisations also took up the idea. An initial meeting was held in Copenhagen in February 1919. The circle of participants at this meeting remained restricted to Norwegians, Swedes and Danes, because the representatives of the FVdG and the NAS had passport difficulties. The NAS was then asked to organise a conference in the Netherlands, to be held in August. But the Dutch government made it clear that it would not allow the foreign delegates into the country. They then turned to the Danes, who experienced the same difficulties as the Dutch. An attempt to hold a conference in Sweden in the spring of 1920 also failed. Thus the international contacts of the syndicalists were initially limited to corresponding with each other, exchanging information or at most visiting each other's national conferences. For example, a delegation from the NAS was present at the FVdG congress of December 1919.

One aspect of the syndicalists' lack of information about the course of the Russian Revolution had particularly serious consequences (conversely, for the Bolsheviks themselves it was advantageous): they knew very little about the fate of the Russian syndicalists and anarchists.²⁴⁸ The latter had fought as determinedly as the Bolsheviks against the Provisional Government and they had co-operated in overthrowing it. They quickly came into conflict with the Bolsheviks after they had taken power. Disputes about the factory committees played an important part here, because the anarcho-syndicalists (the

²⁴⁷ The following comments are based on Thorpe 1989, pp. 91 and 123.

²⁴⁸ The standard work on this continues to be Avrich (1967). Goldberg (1973) should also be mentioned. Thorpe (1989, pp. 95–100 and 162–4) provides a synthesis, while taking into account the original sources. An interpretation of the Russian Revolution from the point of view of a leading Russian anarchist is given by Voline (1975), although his account is, of course, very incomplete.

group around the newspaper called '*Golos Truda*' then '*Vol'nyi Golos Truda*', who joined together to form the All-Russian Confederation of Anarcho-syndicalists) were utterly opposed to their incorporation into the apparatus of the state and the trade unions. Without going into detail, it should be noted that they were compelled to exist in a precarious situation of semi-legality until November 1920, when they were in effect suppressed. Their representatives were repeatedly arrested, their publications were temporarily prohibited, and so on, even while some of their spokesmen had quasi-official positions. It was clear in any case that the Bolsheviks would not accept them as an independent opposition, as they were potential competitors. The participation of Russian anarcho-syndicalists in an international association of revolutionary trade unions was absolutely out of the question for the Bolsheviks. The repressive measures taken against anarcho-communists or individualist anarchists were still more severe, as they stood in even sharper ideological opposition to them than the anarcho-syndicalists.

All these events form the background to the situation in summer 1920, when the holding of the Second Comintern Congress, to which the syndicalist organisations were expressly invited,²⁴⁹ meant that numerous representatives of syndicalist organisations met in Moscow and were able to talk to each other for the first time since the war. Their aim was to make an agreement with the Bolsheviks about a joint revolutionary struggle, and, no less important, to agree on the kind of organisation needed for this. But they also wanted to be properly informed about the Russian Revolution and to enter into contact with the people in Russia who actually shared their views.²⁵⁰

249 'An invitation is also extended to all groups of revolutionary syndicalists, the IWW unions, and other organisations ...' ('Über die Einberufung des II. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 11, p. 2) [English: Degras 1956, pp. 103–4].

250 It would be going beyond the bounds of this international survey to portray the attitude of the anarchist organisations (i.e. the anarchist groupings which were outside, and in some cases in conscious opposition to, the revolutionary trade unions) in any more detail than was provided by our short description of developments in Italy. The position adopted by these 'specific groups' or 'affinity groups' (the anarchists' own expression) was relevant to the formation of opinion in the individual syndicalist organisations because of the many interconnections between the two groups (often involving dual membership). In view of the theoretical premises of 'classical' anarchism, it was of course very difficult to make a complete identification with the Bolsheviks, because categories such as decentralisation, federalism and rejection of all authority could not be squared with Bolshevik ideology. One case of this identification should, however, be mentioned: the

4 The First Trade-Union Contacts: The Question of the International Trade Secretariats and Shliapnikov's Mission

The first congress of the Russian trade unions, in January 1918, had proclaimed that one of its tasks was to promote the rebirth of the international trade-union movement. International trade-union congresses were to be called for this purpose, both a general trade-union congress and specific congresses covering individual trades. In other words, the aim was to restore the International Trade Secretariats (ITSS). But the proposed international trade-union congress did not take place, owing to the continuing civil war in Russia. (See this chapter, section 1). It seems that meetings of individual trades were not actually called at that point. This was no doubt because branch unions were only established in the course of the civil war.²⁵¹

The IFTU, meanwhile, had been reconstituted in the course of 1919 through the contacts which could now be made between national centres no longer divided into mutually hostile military camps. In the same way, there were also endeavours to resuscitate the ITSS. The work of restoring these bodies took much longer owing to the greater fragmentation of the individual trade unions and their far weaker organisation. In some cases, this went hand in

individualist anarchist Victor Serge (1890–1947), who became well-known in international anarchist circles owing to his implication in the terrorism of the so-called 'Bonnot Gang' in France before the First World War. Serge, who was born Viktor Kibal'chich, came from a family of Populist exiles from Russia living in Belgium. He arrived in Barcelona in 1917 after many years in prison, and he made contact with the CNT. At the beginning of 1919, he managed to get to Russia, where he attached himself to the Bolsheviks, seeing them as the 'representatives of the revolutionary deed', although he continued to regard himself as an anarchist, and in the next few years occupied important posts in the Comintern. In the early years of the Russian Revolution, he had many discussions with foreign visitors, particularly from the ranks of the syndicalists of the Latin countries. He was a close friend of Rosmer and Nin, and he defended his position in a series of statements which called forth fierce controversy in the international anarchist movement. Later on, he supported Trotsky and was briefly imprisoned, then, in 1935, after an international campaign of solidarity, he was allowed to leave the country. He lived in exile, first in Belgium, then in France, maintaining close contact with the anti-Stalinist revolutionary left, although he soon quarrelled politically with Trotsky. In 1941, he fled to Mexico, where he wrote a number of novels about the Russian Revolution and an autobiography.

251 The reports of the activities of the individual trade unions which are printed in *Otchet VTsSPS* 1920, pp. 179 ff. do not indicate any international initiatives or contacts. In general, see Milonov (1928) for the history of the individual Russian trade unions.

hand with the process of merging smaller ITSSs together. In most cases, the work was completed in the course of 1920, although in some instances it lasted until 1921.²⁵²

Discussions on bringing together the IFTU and the ITSSs had already started before the war. The Trade Secretariats, which were generally older than the IFTU, were rather sceptical about this, since they were more concerned with the concrete problems of their particular professional branch, and wanted to safeguard their autonomy as organisations. After the war there were objections in only a few cases to the decision to join up with the Amsterdam International, which was reactivated first. Both strands of the international trade-union movement were committed to the same fundamentally reformist position, and there were personal connections between the leaders of each body. Although differences of opinion did arise in the course of time over the concrete ways in which their organisations could be joined together (and political disagreements could of course be perceived in the background), both groups co-operated from the outset. In the ITSSs, a revolutionary opposition emerged very quickly, which was increasingly oriented towards 'Moscow'. The structure of the ITSSs, which rested on the individual trade unions, made it possible for conflicts arising from this to be brought before their own congresses rather than those of the IFTU. It was the majority opinion prevailing in the national trade-union centre in question which was reflected at the IFTU's congresses rather than the ITS view.

When the IFTU was re-established in Amsterdam in summer 1919, it immediately met with open opposition from the Russian trade unions and the communists. Their attitude towards the ITSSs was at first more favourable. As Zinoviev put it early in 1920: they were '*against* participating' in the IFTU, but '*in favour* of participation by communists and others who share our opinion in the international congresses of trade unions of *individual industries or trades*, because these congresses have a close connection with the masses of workers.'²⁵³ What was involved here, as would appear later, was nothing other than the expectation that in this situation the Comintern would be able to play an important part in the revival of the Trade Secretariats.

Much was hoped for from the International Transportworkers' Federation (ITF). This federation organised a strategically significant branch of the economy, and it had already recruited a large membership before the First World

²⁵² See the survey in *Erster Tätigkeitsbericht des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes (Juli 1919–Dezember 1921)*, Amsterdam, 1922, pp. 22–4 [English: *First Report 1922*, pp. 22–4].

²⁵³ G. Sinowjew, 'Was die Kommunistische Internationale bisher war und was sie nun werden muss', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 12, pp. 64–78, here p. 64.

War. The ITF was the first Trade Secretariat to set about re-establishing itself after the war, which it did at a conference held in April 1919.²⁵⁴ Here, too, tensions carried over from the war were visible, as when the Belgian representatives made personal attacks on the Germans who led the ITF during the war because they had failed to protest against the unrestricted U-boat campaign.²⁵⁵ But before the conference started, the British representatives (Robert Williams, Ernest Bevin and Harry Gosling) had already displayed a relaxed attitude towards the German delegates,²⁵⁶ even though at the conference itself they made blunt criticisms of their policies. It is true that the conference was mainly concerned with questions of organisation, such as the transfer of the ITF headquarters to Amsterdam and the creation of a provisional executive, and that to that extent it did not discuss political perspectives. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that alongside the social-democratic trade unions there were also revolutionary unions, for example the railway workers from the Dutch colony of Indonesia (with a majority Indonesian membership) represented by Sneevliet, or the transport workers affiliated to the NAS. Robert Williams of the British transport workers played an important part at the conference, and he proclaimed his commitment to the 'idea of a proletarian world revolution'.²⁵⁷

The new executive of the ITF, of which Fimmen became honorary secretary, now prepared a more representative congress. This finally took place in March 1920 in Christiania (Oslo).²⁵⁸ The congress was also attended by a broad range of organisations. This time the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union of the IWW was present (see the previous section). A telegram of good wishes was received from the Comintern, saying that the class-conscious workers of the

254 See *Protokoll ITF-Konferenz 1919*.

255 The German leaders of the ITF in fact explicitly supported the U-boat campaign, but apparently this had not yet become known in the foreign countries in question. (On this, see chapter 1, where there is a reference to the presumed removal of the relevant documents from the ITF archive before it was handed over to the new leadership).

256 Alan Bullock (1960, p. 113) writes: 'The British and German delegates met by chance while crossing a bridge in the centre of Amsterdam ... It was a curiously dramatic meeting which Bevin never forgot and to which he often referred afterwards'. Harry Gosling gives a similar account in his autobiography. (See the extract quoted in Coates and Topham 1994, p. 852).

257 *Protokoll ITF-Konferenz 1919*, p. 19. It had apparently been forgotten that the Russian seamen's union joined the ITF before the war, perhaps because the organisation had now been in practice completely reconstituted, and its headquarters transferred from Germany to the Netherlands. In subsequent years, during the debates over the application of the Russian transport workers to join the ITF, the fact was not mentioned by anyone, even the Russians.

258 *Bericht ITF-Kongress 1920*.

world were following the congress attentively, and that they were convinced that the congress would be able to fulfil the tasks 'placed on the agenda by the current epoch'. Fimmen replied in the name of the congress that the ITF would do its duty in the struggle to emancipate the proletariat.²⁵⁹ The congress discussed a number of questions of trade-union politics and organisation, but it also issued several proclamations of a general political nature: it called for the unity of the working-class movement in the struggle for the abolition of capitalism, it called for solidarity in self-defence against reaction, and finally it called for the prevention of a new war by all means.²⁶⁰ It was this anti-militarist attitude which was to determine the actions of the ITF and in particular its secretary Edo Fimmen in the years that followed, and it is this that makes it stand out from the majority of the other Trade Secretariats as well as from the IFTU itself. Robert Williams became the chairman of the ITF. Some weeks later he was to visit Russia as a member of the British Labour delegation, and while there he took part in the initial negotiations which led to the formation of the International Trade Union Council, as we shall see in the next section. It was not without reason that a later communist treatment of the subject referred to this congress as 'more radical than any other meeting of the ITF, either before or after'.²⁶¹

The Russian transport unions also wanted to take part in the congress, and they had received an official invitation, but it arrived so late that the delegation did not set off until 9 March 1920, and it had to take the difficult route by ship via Murmansk and Northern Norway, on account of the blockade.²⁶² The three delegates from Russia were M. Bystrov from the Seamen's Union, P. Vompe from the Railway Union, and A. Shliapnikov, who had mandates from the Railway Union, the Local Transport Union and the VTSPS. They did not arrive in Christiania until 23 March, four days after the end of the congress, although they had been able to send a greetings telegram to it from Northern Norway.²⁶³ They asked for details about the course of the congress so as to be able to inform their compatriots on their return, and they made contact with the Norwegian trade unions.²⁶⁴ They issued a statement regretting that they had

259 *Bericht ITF-Kongress 1920*, p. 41. See also chapter 2, section 2.

260 *Bericht ITF-Kongress 1920*, pp. 37–8 and 40.

261 Atschkanow 1928, p. 10.

262 See the report by M. Bystrov, 'Mezhdunarodnyi s"ezd transportnykh sojuzov', in *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, nos. 3–4, June 1920, pp. 29–31.

263 *Bericht ITF-Kongress 1920*, p. 31.

264 M. Bystrov, 'Norvezhskie rabochie i delegatsiia russkikh transportnykh sojuzov', *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, nos. 3–4, June 1920, p. 31.

been unable to arrive in time. This was the fault of the blockade which the international proletariat had not yet been able to remove. They hoped to be able to get to the next congress.²⁶⁵ In any case, the congress reserved a seat on the general council of the ITF for Russia if it joined.²⁶⁶ But the new statutes of the ITF contained a stipulation which the belated Russian delegation had probably overlooked: the ITF intended to associate itself not just with the other International Trade Secretariats but also with the IFTU, and the IFTU's (official) secretary was none other than the (honorary) secretary of the ITF, Edo Fimmen.²⁶⁷

The failure of the Russians to participate in the ITF congress was purely and simply a result of travel difficulties. But the situation with regard to the attempt to exert influence on the revival of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) was much more complex. This aim was also pursued more intensively. Before the First World War, the IMF was led by the Union of German Metalworkers (DMV). Its chair, Alexander Schlicke, was also the Secretary of the IMF. Throughout the war, he had regularly published its organ, the *'Internationale Metallarbeiter-Rundschau'*,²⁶⁸ and after the war he devoted his efforts

265 'Vozzvanie russkikh profsoiuzov vodnogo i zheleznodorozhnogo transporta', *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, nos. 3–4, June 1920, p. 32.

266 *Bericht ITF-Kongress* 1920, p. 33. It has not been possible to establish whether the Russian transport workers' trade unions considered taking up this offer in the months that followed. There are no references to the offer in the Soviet literature on the subject. This was the period that preceded the trade-union debate of winter 1920, a time when they were entirely subordinate to the dictates of Trotsky (who had brought together all the organs of the transport system under a central organisation, the *Tsektran*). On the other hand, according to a curious passage in Bystrov's report (see p. 31 of the article referred to above, in note 12), the Christiania congress stated that because the Russian trade unions were different in many respects from the trade unions of the capitalist world, it was not certain that they would want to enter the organisation. There is no statement of this kind to be found anywhere in the minutes of the congress. Instead, there is the above-mentioned resolution reserving a seat on the council for Russia. Did the ITF executive get cold feet after meeting the Russian delegation, and try to talk them out of joining?

267 *Bericht ITF-Kongress* 1920, p. 44.

268 Interestingly enough, Schlicke, a right-wing Social Democrat, had published positive articles about the Bolsheviks in the *Internationale Metallarbeiter-Rundschau* in the first few months after the October Revolution, including articles about the support they had received from the Petrograd metalworkers, and about a mutual agreement between the Russian and Scandinavian unions of metalworkers (MacShane 1990, pp. 274–5). But this was entirely in line with the policy of the Majority Social Democrats at that time, which was based on the expectation that the Bolsheviks would sign, and keep to, a separate peace with Germany.

to organising a congress. At the beginning of August 1919, he proposed 20 April 1920 as the date of a congress, to be held in a formerly neutral country which was yet to be determined.²⁶⁹ After long discussions behind the scenes – the British trade unions had long been trying to remove him from office, while the neutrals were endeavouring to mediate, but also at the same time to take over the job of organising the congress themselves – he received the agreement of the member organisations of the IMF to the calling of the congress in Copenhagen on 1 June 1920.²⁷⁰ Schlicke, who was also Minister of Labour in Württemberg between January and June 1919, and after that *Reich* Minister of Labour, was removed from his position in the DMV at its congress in October 1919, when the USPD-led opposition under Robert Dißmann won a majority. But he did not resign from his position in the IMF. Some indication of the kind of political disagreements the IMF was now to be involved in is given by the reply of the Bulgarian metalworkers' trade union to Schlicke's official invitation to the congress: they could only take part, they said, if the congress committed itself to the dictatorship of the proletariat and entry into the Comintern.²⁷¹

The central committee of the Russian metalworkers' union was in a certain sense a continuation of the St. Petersburg Union of Metalworkers, which had belonged to the IMF before the war (the legitimacy of this claim would be a rich source of conflict with the IMF in the future). In the middle of January 1920, it had invited all metalworkers' unions to participate in its congress at the end of February as guests.²⁷² The invitation was published without commentary in

269 See his proclamations in *Internationale Metallarbeiter-Rundschau*, no. 1, January 1919, p. 1, and no. 8, August 1919, p. 57.

270 On the disputes over the calling of the congress, see *Internationale Metallarbeiter-Rundschau*, no. 8, August 1919, p. 58, and no. 9, September 1919, p. 70. The official invitation is printed in no. 1, January 1920, p. 1. See also *Internationaler Metallarbeiter-Bund*, 1923, p. 44. In his official report on his activities, Schlicke grandly ignored this struggle which went on behind the scenes throughout 1919 (*Bericht des Sekretärs an den VIII. internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongress in Kopenhagen für die Geschäftszeit September 1913 bis März 1920*, p. 12).

271 'Zum internat. Metallarbeiterkongress', *Internationale Metallarbeiter-Rundschau*, no. 3, March 1920, p. 21. This was the metalworkers' organisation belonging to the General Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Bulgaria, which was close to the former 'Narrow' faction of Bulgarian Social Democracy, now the Bulgarian Communist Party. The metalworkers' trade union belonging to the General Trade Union Confederation was officially a member of the IMF, but it was fairly insignificant in comparison with the communist trade unions, as indeed was the central organisation of the Social Democratic unions.

272 *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov v revoliutsiiaakh* 1927, pp. 275–6.

the IMF's organ.²⁷³ The congress in question finally took place between 2 and 6 April 1920.²⁷⁴ Disappointingly, no foreign representatives were present. But the chairman of the Russian trade unions, Shliapnikov, had already travelled to Western Europe in March. His first task was to take part in the ITF congress in Christiania, for which he was provided with the appropriate mandates. His two co-delegates seem to have returned to Russia after the congress, but Shliapnikov now set out to visit Europe's metalworking trade unions.

In the middle of April, he arrived in Stockholm, where he appeared at demonstrations. There were fierce campaigns against him in the bourgeois press.²⁷⁵ The Russian union of metalworkers sent telegrams to the French, British and Italian organisations appealing to them to facilitate its representative's admission to their countries for the purpose of making contact, but Shliapnikov, who had only received permission to stay in Sweden for a week, had first to return to Christiania. From there he got into contact with the DMV, and thanks to its good offices he managed to get to Germany at the beginning of May.²⁷⁶ On 9 May, he spoke at a general assembly of the Berlin factory councils alongside representatives of the KPD and the left wing of the USPD.²⁷⁷ The DMV received extensive material on the development of the Russian trade-union movement from him for the first time, which it printed in its press organs.²⁷⁸

273 *Internationale Metallarbeiter-Rundschau*, no. 1, January 1920, p. 7.

274 *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov v revoliutsiakh* 1927, p. 297.

275 See the reports of the ROSTA agency from Stockholm (GARF 5667/5/226/7–9, 14–15, 17).

276 GARF 5667/5/226/29, 33.

277 'Massenkundgebung der Betriebsräte', *RF*, no. 74, 11 May 1920.

278 A certain irony was attached to these publications. They were also used in the factional struggle within the DMV between supporters of the left and right in the USPD. The main point of conflict between the two groupings, led on the right by Robert Dißmann and on the left by the editor of the DMV's newspaper the '*Metallarbeiter-Zeitung*', Richard Müller, was the status of the Councils. Should they be subordinate assistants of the trade unions, which actually ran the socialist economy – this was the position of the right wing – or should they be placed over the trade unions – this was Müller's view? Dißmann published resolutions passed by the first and second congresses of the Russian trade unions in the *Betriebsräte-Zeitschrift für Funktionäre der Metallindustrie* [Factory Council Journal for Functionaries in the Metal Industry], no. 1, 1920, pp. 97–103, under the significant title 'The Position of the Trade Unions in Soviet Russia'. He added both a preface and an appendix containing fierce polemics against the representatives of the so-called independent movement of Factory Councils, citing in support of his views the inclusion of the Factory Committees within the organisational structure of the Russian trade unions. Richard Müller replied by publishing an article by Shliapnikov in several parts under the title 'On the Trade Union Movement in Soviet Russia'. The editorial introduction to the

Shliapnikov's main concern, however, was the IMF congress. On 7 May, he telegraphed from Berlin to Moscow that the congress would now begin on 15 June in Copenhagen, and he asked for further delegates to be sent in good time. In response, four delegates set out to make the journey via Murmansk at the end of May.²⁷⁹

Schlicke had decided that the congress should be postponed for fourteen days on account of the parliamentary elections in Germany, which had suddenly been set to take place on 6 June.²⁸⁰ The British delegates protested against this decision, and he now proposed a further postponement, this time until 20 July. The tug-of-war over the date did not end there, however. The British delegates proposed 6 August as the date, and Berne as the venue. But the majority of the IMF's member organisations opposed this, insisting on 20 July and Copenhagen.²⁸¹

first part of this (*Metallarbeiter-Zeitung*, no. 25, 19 June 1920) states, in a sharp attack on the *Betriebsräte-Zeitschrift*, that the article shows that Soviet rule and the 'socialised national economy are built up and supported on the Workers' and Peasants' Councils', and that 'the trade unions are the organs of the Factory Councils'. But Müller lost his position in the DMV shortly afterwards. He soon moved with the rest of the left USPD to the KPD. (See Opel 1957, pp. 112–13; and Wentzel 1981, pp. 41–2 and 205–6). The *Metallarbeiter-Zeitung*, under its new editor, continued to publish Shliapnikov's article (from no. 27, 3 July to no. 31, 31 July). The new editor referred back to Müller's introduction in presenting the last part of the article. The whole of Shliapnikov's text, he said, and the resolutions quoted in it, demonstrated that the trade unions would hold on to power over the economy. This Russian system of organisation secured the power of the working class, and was therefore fundamentally different from the 'little council clubs' about which there was so much 'ballyhoo' in Germany. As is well known, Dißmann and Müller were both wrong, but significantly neither of them said anything about the *party*. The controversy unfolded after Shliapnikov's departure for Copenhagen, and he seems to have been unaware of it. Although the position supported by Dißmann was formally derived from his own (and that of the Workers' Opposition in Soviet Russia, which was in the process of emerging at that time), he would certainly have pointed out to him, if he had found out about the controversy, that his views were based on his position as a trade-union leader in a socialised metal industry, whereas Dißmann would first have to overthrow capitalism. (On the German discussions about the relationship between the Councils, the trade unions and the party, see von Oertzen 1976).

279 GARF 5667/5/226/27, 31, 52–3.

280 One consequence of these elections was that owing to the massive losses suffered by the SPD, Schlicke lost his ministerial office. He was subsequently appointed Berlin representative of the International Labour Office.

281 This is Schlicke's account, in *Bericht des Sekretärs an den VIII. internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongress in Kopenhagen für die Geschäftszeit September 1913 bis März 1920*, p. 12.

This constant shifting of the date backwards and forwards seemed strange to Shliapnikov (and not only to him, as was to be shown in June by numerous speeches at the Copenhagen congress).²⁸² Schlicke wrote to him that his changes in the date of the congress were always responses to the objections of particular trade unions; moreover, the Russians were not members of the organisation so they had no right to complain.²⁸³ Shliapnikov then turned to the DMV, suggesting that they should meet in Copenhagen on 15 June in any case, so as to be able to set up at least a provisional centre for the organisation of a genuine congress. He obviously wanted Schlicke to be booted out. Dißmann replied that the changes in the date were in fact the result of the objections of member organisations. Without the British, in particular, the whole thing would be a waste of time. 'Whether we wish it or not, we have to keep the 20 July date. And I respectfully ask you to make sure that there is no meeting of an unrepresentative congress at which resolutions are passed etc. If you work hand in hand with us the 20 July date will bring success. I hope ... to be able to greet you in Copenhagen on 20 July or before that'.

But in Shliapnikov's eyes, Dißmann's attitude was opportunist. On 5 June, he sent a telegram to all metalworkers' unions, saying: 'Renegade Schlicke is sabotaging the international congress!' Whatever happened, he added, there must be a meeting in Copenhagen.²⁸⁴ There was in fact a meeting in Copenhagen from 15–17 June, at which, in addition to Russia, Denmark, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway and Sweden were represented.²⁸⁵ There was a thorough discussion of the organisation, the finances and the agenda of the congress, and it was agreed that it would begin on 20 August. Shliapnikov agreed to all this, as he had received a promise from the leader of the Danish metalworkers, Hansen, that visas would be procured for the Russian delegates in August. He then returned to Russia. The other four metalworkers' delegates, who had arrived at the end of May in Norway, having travelled from Russia, were asked to remain in Christiania. The Central Committee of the Russian metalworkers' trade union

282 The next few paragraphs make use of an extensive memorandum by Shliapnikov, which is undated but was written in September and October 1920 ('O mezhdunarodykh delakh soiuзов rabochikh metallistov', GARF 5667/5/38/123–48 and RGASPI 534/5/43/1–16).

283 On this, see Schlicke's own account, in *Der achte Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress am 20., 21., 22., 23., und 24. August 1920 im Studentenheim in Kopenhagen. Offizieller Bericht*, Berne, 1921, pp. 38–9.

284 *Internationaler Metallarbeiter-Bund* 1923, p. 93.

285 The official minutes of this meeting are in Shliapnikov's memorandum of September–October 1920.

approved Shliapnikov's actions at a session held in the middle of July. The attempt to hold an international congress of metalworkers should be continued, it resolved.²⁸⁶

Schlicke's reaction to these events was hostile, however. He expressed his views in a letter of 24 June to Hansen:

Please do not issue the resolution which was adopted on Shliapnikov's initiative by a conference which assembled by accident. I have been fighting since the end of the war to prevent conventicles of any sort from upsetting the plans of the constitutionally elected leadership of the federation ... As long as I am International Secretary, I absolutely cannot allow any kind of conference, even one held by my best friends, to cut across the measures taken in accordance with the provisions of the statute. You will certainly understand this ... Did anyone at the conference understand fully what they were doing? The Scandinavians acted to be obliging, the Russians out of malice, the Italians and the Luxemburgers out of inexperience! Shliapnikov's behaviour I do understand: he is advancing the cause of the Third International in Moscow. And he wants to bring about a congress of the Third International for the professional groups that belong to the metal industry as well.²⁸⁷

But it was clear that there was too much discontent about the way he had moved the dates around, and the participants in the June Copenhagen meeting represented too many people for them to be played off against each other in such a crude manner. The decisions of the Copenhagen meeting were not overturned: on 20 August 1920, the IMF congress at last took place. (See chapter 3, section 9, on this congress).

Thus the Soviet trade unions had now attempted to exert an influence on two of the most important International Trade Secretariats by directly participating in their congresses. Adverse circumstances had prevented this from happening, so that how the other trade unions would have treated the Russian representatives, and what their reactions would have been in the political controversies which would certainly have arisen, must remain a matter of speculation. With a number of other Russian trade unions, such as the printers, the leather-workers, the textile workers and the building workers, there was nothing more than an exchange of invitations and greetings. The difficulty of travelling between Rus-

286 *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov v revoliutsiiaakh* 1927, p. 342.

287 Quoted in Opel 1968, pp. 71–3.

sia and Western Europe prevented them from making any visits comparable to those made in the first two cases.²⁸⁸ In any case, a political act now took place which fundamentally altered the context of relations between the Russian trade unions and the ITSS: the foundation of the International Trade Union Council (ITUC) in June/July 1920 and the endeavour to create a revolutionary alternative to the Amsterdam International which followed from this.

288 Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 17. The following correspondence was printed in *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, nos. 1–2, May 1920, pp. 16–18: an invitation from the Building Workers' International to the Russians asking them to join, an invitation from the German building workers' union to the Russians to come to their next conference and a rejection of an invitation to the Russian building workers' conference, because it was impossible to travel to Russia. Two textile workers' leaders, Tom Shaw and Ben Turner, were members of the British Labour delegation which visited Russia in May and June 1920. They invited their Russian colleagues to work with them in the International Union of Textile Workers. Verbal agreement was even reached on this point. But the Russians did not react to letters or to an invitation to the international congress held in 1921. They later declared that nothing of the kind had reached them. (*x. Internationaler Textilarbeiter-Kongress. Paris, den 19. bis 24. September 1921, Verhandlungsbericht*, London, 1921, p. 5; Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 38). The Russian union of leather workers sent out invitations to an international congress of leather workers to be held in Moscow on 1 April 1920 and announced that it was sending two representatives to Western Europe (but they would not be travelling until the next year). ('Aufruf an die Arbeiter der Lederbranche aller Länder', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 9, p. 128).

The International Trade Union Council (1920–1)

1 Its Foundation

As 1919 turned into 1920, the outlines of a Bolshevik victory in the Civil War began to take shape. The military operations were, it is true, by no means at an end, as was shown by the attack of the Poles and the advance of Wrangel during 1920. But the rule of the Bolsheviks in the area they controlled was now firmly established. Even the Entente powers had to loosen the blockade and finally abandon it completely once their troops had withdrawn. Whereas in 1918 and 1919 only a few individuals had been able to make their way to Russia, illegally and by routes that were sometimes peculiar and dangerous, in 1920 the workers' movements of Western Europe were in a position to send proper delegations. Their task was mainly 'fact-finding', though they also expressed general solidarity with the Russian Revolution and protested against foreign intervention. In some cases the journey to Russia was part of an attempt to find common political ground with the Bolsheviks, in other words to work out whether membership in the Comintern was a possible option. The arrival of two of these delegations in summer 1920 gave the impulse to the decision to organise an international revolutionary trade-union centre, in association with the Bolshevik leaders of the Russian trade unions. The next year, the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), or Profintern, arose out of this initiative.

A delegation from Great Britain spent the period from May until June 1920 in Russia.¹ Its presence was a result of the 'Hands off Russia' movement,² which was a protest against Britain's participation in the Allies' intervention in the Russian Civil War. The decision to send the delegation had been made at a special conference of the TUC in December 1919.³ The Labour Party also gave its agreement, with the result that a joint delegation was sent. The Independent

1 The story of this British delegation had been presented in the following books and articles: Graubard 1956, pp. 214–22; Gurovich 1973, pp. 71–7; Cowden 1984, pp. 75–92; 'The British Labour Delegation to Russia, 1920' 1987, pp. 257–61; and White 1991, pp. 231–48. The atmosphere in which the delegation operated was later described by Alexander Berkman (1989, pp. 133–41 and 149–51) and Emma Goldman (1931, pp. 792–6).

2 Bünger 1958, pp. 1259–83.

3 See 'Special Trades Union Congress. December 10th, 1919', in *International Trades Union Review*, no. 4, January 1920, pp. 4–7.

Labour Party also participated, with its own representatives. The philosopher Bertrand Russell travelled with the delegation as well, because that was the only way he could gain permission to visit Russia. What was called the 'British Labour Delegation' set off on 27 April. Having passed through Estonia it arrived in Russia on 10 May. Its train came into Petrograd the next day, and was greeted at the station by Lozovsky and the secretary of the Comintern, Angelica Balabanov, in the name of the Petrograd Trade Union Council.

The delegation remained in Petrograd until 16 May. A big meeting was organised by the trade unions in its honour on 12 May, although it was clear to the Bolsheviks, as the press announced, that a considerable number of the delegates were opposed to them politically. After that, it began its quest for information. On 17 May, it arrived in Moscow, and here it was welcomed by a big gathering at the Bolshoi Theatre.⁴ It then visited numerous Soviet state institutions, was received by Lenin on 26 May,⁵ and travelled on 28 May to Nizhnii Novgorod, accompanied by Lozovsky among others. It then went down the Volga to Saratov. Here the delegation divided into two parts because one of its members had fallen sick. One group returned to Moscow and from there either travelled home directly or went to visit the Soviet front in the war against Poland, near Smolensk; the others travelled further down the Volga towards Astrakhan.⁶ The two groups rejoined each other in Moscow, and on 17 June they began their journey back to the West.

Having arrived in England on 30 June, the delegation presented an 'official' report signed by all its members.⁷ It was an attempt to provide an unvarnished account of the situation in Russia on the basis of the diverse pieces of information the delegates had collected on their various visits. The report contained sections on the economy and the food situation, the systems of health and education, the situation in the trade unions, and so on. There were also a number of reports from individual members of the delegation who had visited specific establishments, as well as a series of documents from these institutions, but they also included statements handed to them by the anti-Bolshevik opposi-

4 There is a description of this occasion in Goldschmidt 1920, pp. 51–4.

5 V.I. Lenin 1977, p. 592. This meeting had the result that on 30 May, Lenin sent a 'Letter to the British ['English' in the original Russian text] Workers' (Lenin 1966, vol. 31, pp. 139–43), in which he indicated the differences of opinion he had had with part of the delegation and called for the formation of a communist party in Britain.

6 The American journalist Marguerite E. Harrison, who accompanied this group on its journey down the Volga, later wrote an account of her experiences, strongly tinged with anti-Bolshevism (Harrison 1921, pp. 170–9).

7 *British Labour Delegation to Russia 1920. Report*, London, 1920.

tion (the Mensheviks, the Socialist Revolutionaries and Kropotkin). Although the delegation had naturally had to conform to an official Bolshevik framework, it had managed to make contact with these other forces, and during its visits to some institutions it had been an on-the-spot witness to open clashes between the Bolsheviks and their socialist opponents (as, for example, at a meeting of the printworkers' trade union, which was a stronghold of the Mensheviks in Moscow).⁸ The delegates were in no doubt that there were many measures of repression in progress, which contradicted the official picture with which they had been presented.

There were big political differences within the delegation: positions ranged all the way from classical reformism to outright pro-Bolshevism. The agreed judgement – in other words the consensus to which all the participants could append their signatures⁹ – was neither an uncritical celebration of the revolution, nor a root and branch condemnation of it. They were united above all in condemning the foreign blockade and the intervention, which they considered to have had catastrophic consequences. The final paragraph was formulated in a very British way: 'The Russian Revolution has not had a fair chance'.¹⁰

The private reports published subsequently by numerous members of the delegation were much more critical, with one significant exception. Since the rejection of Bolshevism formulated in these reports corresponded by and large with political attitudes already expressed beforehand, we shall not be wrong in concluding that on the whole the visit to Russia simply confirmed the existing views of the delegates.

The Bolsheviks too did not hold back from giving an evaluation of the visit. They were clearly aware of the importance of the delegation, marking as it did a break in three years of isolation, and this was why they issued special English-language editions of their newspapers. The arrival of the delegation's train first at Petrograd and then at Moscow was used each time as an opportunity for

8 On these contacts made by the delegation, see Naarden 1992, pp. 386–95.

9 After his return from Moscow, one of the participants, Purcell, told the TUC congress that this document was 'a report which could be signed by everybody, because nothing was included in it which would have indicated who favours the Soviet system in Russia and who doesn't' (*Report of Proceedings* 1920, p. 259).

10 *British Labour Delegation 1920*, p. 27. Purcell's speech at the TUC congress was still more pointed: 'Noone has the right to make a judgment on the correctness or incorrectness of Russia's policies if he does not bear in mind that firstly Russia has been at war for six years and secondly inherited all kinds of sicknesses from the Tsarist regime'. (*Report of Proceedings* 1920, p. 259). The report was adopted without discussion and without any opposition (see *Report of Proceedings* 1920, p. 260).

big 'internationalist' demonstrations in honour of the delegation and the British workers' movement. In their welcoming addresses and later in speeches at mass demonstrations in both cities, Soviet representatives, such as Lozovsky, Tsyperovich, Kamenev and Bukharin, expressed their gratitude for the solidarity actions of the British workers and their hope that they would lead to greater things. But they did not refrain from sharply criticising the leadership of the British workers' movement for failing to take the road of revolution.¹¹

While most of the members of the delegation, however enthusiastically they expressed their support for the Russian Revolution, did not want to carry out a revolution in their own country, this was not true of two of the delegates, a point they made quite clear at the time. When they returned, the two would participate in the endeavour to establish a communist party in Great Britain. They were Robert Williams, who was there as a representative of the Labour Party, and Albert Arthur Purcell, who was in Russia for the TUC. Williams himself had a 'two-hour' discussion with Lenin about establishing a communist party some days before the delegation as a whole met the Bolshevik leader. Williams asked him whether the delegates should concentrate more on the restoration of economic links with Russia or on making propaganda for the Comintern when they returned to Britain. He received this reply: 'Let those people who believe in peace work for peace, and those who believe in communism and the dictatorship work for the overthrow of capitalism'. This was the final conclusion Williams drew from his experiences in Russia: 'We – some members of the delegation and myself – returned from Russia with the desire to do all we could to set up a clearly defined communist party, which would recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat as an unshakable principle'.¹²

11 See, for example, Lozovsky's speech at the reception for the British delegation by the Petrograd Trade Union Council, printed in Lozovsky 1930, pp. 32–9, and also the reports in the VTSPS's periodical *Professional'noe dvizhenie*, in particular no. 15 (58), 1 May, no. 17 (60), 22 May, and no. 18 (61), 29 May 1920. These reports give full details about the different members of the delegation. In an article about the significance of the delegation, entitled 'Vtoraia angliiskaia delegatsiia', Lozovsky somewhat maliciously recalled that there had already been one British delegation to Russia, under the right-wing labour leader Arthur Henderson, who was a minister in the coalition government at the time. He, like the Belgian and French Social Democratic leaders, had hurried to Russia in the spring of 1917 in order to push for Russia's continued participation in the war.

12 Williams 1920a, pp. 11 and 17. Lenin also replied to Williams in his above-mentioned 'Letter to the English Workers', though he gave his answer a slightly different twist. He advised people not to call themselves communists if they were not. Let those who are pacifists pass peace resolutions, he said. The more they do that, the sooner they will meet the fate of Kerensky in Russia, he added (Lenin 1966, Vol. 31, pp. 141–2). However, a British

In fact the only other member of the delegation who shared this intention was Purcell. Once back in Britain, Williams and Purcell, and one other person, attached their own contributions to the report of the delegation, and these were printed as Appendices 15 to 17.¹³ Williams defended Bolshevism in a series of articles in which he also called for the foundation of a communist party. The CPGB later brought out the articles in pamphlet form,¹⁴ and they were also distributed internationally by the ITF, though with the significant omission of his call for the foundation of a communist party and his defence of the Comintern.¹⁵ He described the Second International as ‘worse than useless’ and proclaimed his readiness to ‘work for the extension of the Third International’. Finally he referred to what he had done in Moscow on the last day of his visit: he, Purcell and the representatives of the Italian and Russian trade unions ‘directed an appeal to the leaders of the left wing of the trade union movement to create an international of trade unions, which would be free of the paralysing influence of the Legiens the Gomperses the Appletons and all others who were more imperialist, national and chauvinist than the landowning and capitalist

employee of the Soviet Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, who accompanied Williams on his visit to Lenin, described this meeting in the following way: ‘Imagine the scene: the fat, noisy Bob Williams, sitting in a low leather armchair, loudly relates his exploits to Lenin, and explains what he thinks about the immediate goals of the revolutionary movement in England. It was a real boasting match. Lenin sat in his usual attitude and appeared to be impressed by what Williams had to say. Lenin said very little; he asked a few questions from time to time. I was very upset that this unimpressive would-be great man was able, it seemed, to gain the attention of our leader. Comrade Lenin understood (and spoke) English very well, which is why he only rarely turned to me for assistance. Nevertheless, I began to suspect that the explanation for the attention Lenin appeared to show to Williams was simply that he did not understand all he was saying. When we said goodbye to Lenin I therefore asked him “Did you understand everything he said?”. He replied without hesitation: “The man has complete mush for brains” (Fainberg 1970, p. 217). It should be added that this meeting, like a number of other meetings with Lenin in connection with the establishment of the International Trade Union Council, is not mentioned in *Vladimir Il’ich Lenin, Biograficheskaya Khronika*.

- 13 The titles of these three appendices were ‘Industrial Organisation and the Mobilisation of Labour’, ‘Russian Militarism and the New Patriotism’, and ‘The Blockade and its Effects’ (*British Labour Delegation 1920*, pp. 119–27).
- 14 Williams 1920b. Williams had originally been commissioned by the *Daily Mail* to write these articles, but the paper refused to print them in view of their pro-Soviet tendency, so Williams published them instead in the Labour newspaper the *Daily Herald*.
- 15 See note 11. It was published for the information of members as ITF Document No. 3, by a decision of the ITF General Council sitting on 31 May and 1 June, but it was described as ‘the expression of a personal opinion’.

class of their country during the war'.¹⁶ As Williams's reference to the Italian trade unions indicates, an Italian delegation also arrived in Russia, later than the British delegation. Hence it is necessary to discuss the Italian position here so as to put the emergence of Williams's appeal into context.

On 3 April 1920, the executive of the PSI, after discussions with the other organisations of the Italian workers' movement, made the decision to 'send a technical and political mission to Russia, in order to study and investigate the communist regime established by Lenin'.¹⁷ On 25 May, more than a dozen representatives of the PSI, the CGL and the co-operatives, accompanied by a number of experts, set out on the wearisome journey to Russia via Germany, Scandinavia and Estonia. They arrived at Petrograd on 6 June, almost a month after the British delegation.¹⁸ The delegation was extremely well-equipped. Very wisely, it was prepared not only to look after itself – it had even brought medical supplies – but also to provide aid to the Russians. Its luggage consisted of more than one hundred trunks. It travelled on to Moscow on 14 June. At the beginning of July, it set off for a journey of exactly fourteen days down the Volga river. After its return to Moscow the delegation split up. Some members returned to Italy immediately, some remained in Russia until the Second Comintern Congress, and some stayed even longer.

The situation of this delegation differed from that of the British one. The Italian Socialists had already joined the Comintern the previous year, and the Italian trade unions had signed a pact placing themselves under the formal political leadership of the socialist party. (See chapter 2, section 2). The Bolsheviks attached correspondingly high hopes to them; they were comrades who wanted to pursue the same revolutionary path as Russia, rather than simply be vague alliance partners like the British, who were chiefly important for their role in ending the blockade.¹⁹ But the Italian delegation was not originally sent

16 Williams 1920b, pp. 26–7. These are among the passages missing from the ITF edition. At the TUC congress of September, however, he held back on this issue – as did Purcell – and did not utter a single word about the International Trade Union Council. We shall return to this point later.

17 These are the words of the *Almanacco socialista italiano* for 1920, quoted in König 1967, p. 82.

18 On the Italian delegation, see the information in König 1967, pp. 82–5 (though this is inaccurate in many details), and in Spriano 1967, pp. 64–5.

19 See, for example, the optimistic view presented by Lozovsky in his article 'Ital'ianskaia rabochaia delegatsiia', *Professional'noe dvizhenie*, no. 19 (62), 5 June 1920. See also the remarks of an Italian participant in the reception given in Petrograd by the Bolshevik Party (and not, as in the British case, by the Russian trade unions alone): 'When the English

to take part in the Second Comintern Congress. It only became known in Italy after the delegation set off that the congress had been summoned, so that the question of a mandate to attend had to be settled by telegraphic means from Moscow. The primary purpose of the delegation was to gather information, but it also took steps to establish trade links between the Italian and Russian co-operatives, as a result of which the Italian government was itself not unfavourably disposed towards it.

The delegates also responded to the domestic need for information once they had returned to Italy.²⁰ But they were unable to agree on a large-scale joint report, and had to make do by issuing a short political declaration.²¹ The minimal consensus expressed in this document consisted first and foremost of a sharp denunciation of the Allied intervention in the Civil War. The revolution was also welcomed as constituting the historically necessary overthrow of Tsarism, but no view was expressed on whether the revolution should serve as a model for others. A sentence asserting that after the victorious conclusion of the Civil War there was no longer a need for a 'transitional dictatorship' and that the Soviets could now act freely can certainly be interpreted as a guarded criticism of Bolshevik rule. (Some members of this delegation had indeed made efforts to get in touch with Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries).²²

The big differences of opinion in the *'Missione Socialista Italiana'* to Russia were intensified by the political situation they met on their return to Italy in

labour people arrived in Petrograd a month before we did, the communist party simply ignored them. They were treated very politely, but with ostentatious coolness. They were the inquisitive outsiders who had come to study a new world in process of formation and to observe it with the spectacles of criticism without loving or understanding it. The Italians were the faithful brothers, who had come to embrace them fraternally' (Vacirca 1921, p. 44).

20 This requirement for information also operated in reverse, of course. The VTSPS published a collective volume (*Professional'nye soiuzy v Italii*, Moscow, 1920) with original contributions from D'Aragona, Bianchi, Dugoni, Colombino and Serrati, which provided extensive information on the Italian trade unions – both the CGL and a number of branch organisations – and their relationship with the Socialist Party.

21 'Dichiarazione ufficiale della missione socialista in Russia', printed in Colombino 1921, pp. vii–x. This declaration came about on the initiative of the leader of the PSI, Serrati, and expressed his line of compromise between the different factions of the party. Meanwhile, the first critical declarations made on their return by the trade-union leaders D'Aragona, Bianchi and Colombino provoked fierce attacks from the committed communists in the group (see Cortesi 1973, p. 253).

22 König 1967, p. 84; Naarden 1992, pp. 400–1.

autumn 1920, and in view of this the participants presented their impressions and recorded their individual experiences in numerous articles, speeches and books. Despite the wide variety of information provided in this way, what was true of the British delegation applied also to the Italian one: 'It can be said, though this is somewhat of a generalisation, that every member of the delegation to Soviet Russia saw what he or she wanted to see'.²³ In particular, the reports published by two of the trade unionists in the delegation contained fierce attacks on the Bolsheviks, whom they accused of bureaucratic dictatorship and mismanagement.²⁴

But the Italian delegation was not only subject to differences of opinion between 'revolutionaries' and 'reformists'. Another problem, still more serious perhaps, was the dispute which broke out between Serrati, who was actually in favour of entering the Comintern, and was in a sense the leader of the delegation, and the Bolsheviks. This turned on the demand by the Comintern's leaders that the PSI expel its right wing. The dispute came into the open at the Second Comintern Congress, but it was already there in the background at the time of the first political conversations of the delegation in Russia, and as a result the Comintern leaders quickly began to favour various other members of the delegation over Serrati. This meant that the political environment in which the delegation was manoeuvring was extremely precarious and repeatedly offered occasions for conflict. This could not remain without consequences for the trade-union negotiations as well. (These developments eventually led to the split in the PSI at the beginning of 1921 and the establishment of the Italian communist party, while a year afterwards they led to the emergence of a third, reformist party, which then gained the allegiance of most of the trade union leaders).²⁵

The leaders of the Russian trade unions had an advance meeting with representatives of the British delegation, but this only resulted in general exchanges

23 König 1967, p. 84.

24 Besides the book by Colombino, already mentioned, we have his report to the congress of the metalworkers' trade union, and also the book by Giuseppe Bianchi (1921). In addition to the large number of newspaper articles and speeches of the time on the delegation's experiences in Russia, one should note the following books: one jointly written by Gregorio Nofri and Fernando Pozzani (1921), who were economic specialists and members of the co-operative movement, and the other by the parliamentary deputy Vincenzo Vacirca (1921).

25 The whole subject of the conflict with the Comintern over Serrati's leadership of the PSI and the resultant splits of 1921–2 has been dealt with exhaustively by König (1967) and Spriano (1967).

of information and declarations of solidarity.²⁶ A broader discussion took place on the afternoon of 16 June.²⁷ The circle of participants was recruited from both delegations. The British group was essentially factional, consisting as it did of only the two communist sympathisers, who were on the last day of their stay in Russia. The Italians had the backing of their delegation on the second day after its arrival in Moscow, though they had no specific mandate from the organisation that sent them to Russia. Representatives of the Russian trade unions were also present. The meeting had been called by the ECCI. Zinoviev represented the Comintern, Purcell and Williams represented the British trade unions, D'Aragona, Bianchi, Dugoni and Colombino represented the Italian trade unions, and the Russian trade unions were represented by Lozovsky, Tomsky, Tsyperovich, Shmidt and Mel'nichansky. The aim of the meeting was to organise international co-operation between all the revolutionary trade unions.

Zinoviev opened the sitting. He enumerated the three possible perspectives for revolutionary co-operation: a communist fraction within Amsterdam, an independent revolutionary trade-union international, or a trade-union section within the Comintern. They had decided in favour of the third possibility, he said, partly because not just the Russian trade unions but also many other trade unions had already come down in favour of this idea. As supporters of the third option he instanced the Bulgarians, the Scandinavians, the Germans (such as the DMV, the railway workers and the Berlin Trade Union Cartel), the English (the Triple Alliance) and the Americans (the IWW). This was of course an exaggerated way of looking at things, because Zinoviev's list included not only the few trade unions which had actually come out publicly in favour of entry into the Comintern and were not yet members of the IFTU, but also left-wing trade-union sections of national centres which already belonged to the IFTU, in which communists admittedly occupied important offices but still only constituted a minority. Moreover, some of these trade unions had done no

26 On 19 May, the delegation met the presidium of the VTsSPS. (On this, see the incomplete notes made by a British participant, L. Haden Guest, in *British Labour Delegation 1920*, Appendix 14, pp. 116–18). On 10 June, a plenum of the VTsSPS took place with British participation. (The minutes of this plenum are in GARF 5451/4/26). One important result was an invitation to the Russian trade unions to send a delegation of their own to Britain.

27 A report of this discussion does exist, and it was circulated widely at the time. It is printed in German, with some small changes, in a number of publications, including Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 69–73, and *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 109–14.

more than issue general declarations of solidarity with the Russian Revolution, which with the best will in the world could hardly be regarded as a declaration of intent to join the Comintern. In any case, Zinoviev expressed the confident expectation that a trade-union section of the Comintern would be a powerful pole of attraction. Williams agreed that the influence of the Third International in the trade-union movement was growing, but he had to point out to him that not all participants in the meeting had a mandate to make an agreement. He therefore proposed that a number of those present should set up a committee with the job of calling an international trade-union conference. When Zinoviev responded by putting forward a resolution to that effect, Dugoni also objected that he had no mandate. He also protested against the way all non-communist members of the Amsterdam International were described, without exception, as 'yellow'.

D'Aragona indicated an additional problem, when he raised the question of whether individual trade unions which declared in favour of the Comintern would have to leave their national centres if these were still attached to the IFTU. Lozovsky denied this. But in saying that it was obligatory for each trade union to support an international association of revolutionary trade unions, on the one hand, and to work within its appropriate national centre, on the other hand, he gave expression to a dilemma which would pervade the whole future history of the RILU. Zinoviev, for his part, compared the role that an international trade-union conference could play with the role of Zimmerwald. There too some of the participants had still belonged to the Second International. Lozovsky added the comment that time was of the essence. The trade-union movement was being left behind by the political movement. In order to underline the urgency of the matter, he pointed out that yet more trade unions had now joined the Third International: unions from Spain (the CNT), Argentina and Brazil – here he was clearly referring to the syndicalist unions – as well as 'most of the Polish trade unions' and the Bulgarian trade unions, through their representative Nedialkov-Shablin, who was currently in Moscow.

Although the Italians, the British and the Russians had different motivations and expectations (one can assume this, on the basis of the attitude the participants took up in the following months), they were able to accept the resolution formulated on the basis of Williams's proposal as the lowest common denominator around which the conference could reach agreement. At least it contained an explicit condemnation of the IFTU, which had shown itself to be incapable of conducting the class struggle or establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Instead of the IFTU a 'true international' was demanded, with no social patriots and no links with the League of Nations. A rep-

representative conference should be organised to create this body.²⁸ In view of the impending departure of Purcell and Williams, the task of formulating the final draft of the invitation to the proposed conference was handed over to an editorial committee consisting of two Russians and two Italians, and this committee was also given the job of editing the minutes of the meeting. Thus Zinoviev was able to announce the creation of an alternative to Amsterdam that very evening, at a big 'internationalist' reception for the trade unions held at the Bolshoi Theatre, which the Italian trade unionists also took part in.²⁹

This reception was also attended by many people who had already arrived in Moscow as delegates to the Second Comintern Congress, which was about to begin. There were many revolutionary trade unionists among them, above all from syndicalist organisations, though there were also some from unions with a social-democratic background (from the Balkans, for instance). Not all of them were in possession of an official mandate. Some months later, Lozovsky listed the following places of origin: Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and France, as well as the following organisations: the Shop Stewards from Great Britain, the Syndicalists and the *Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union* [General Workers' Union] (AAU) from Germany, and the IWW from the USA and Australia. There were many 'official and unofficial negotiations and discussions'³⁰ with all these delegates in the following weeks. The aim was to draw concrete consequences from the 16 June conference, and the negotiations over this were conducted

28 The version of this resolution published in the report of the International Trade Union Council includes a further phrase, in which the movement for leaving the reformist trade unions is explicitly condemned. This would turn out to be a major point of disagreement in the negotiations with the syndicalists which took place over the next few weeks.

29 There are two sources which deal with these discussions: the diary of Marcel Cachin (1993, pp. 438–9), a leading French socialist and later a communist, who had come to Moscow to negotiate over the entry of his party into the Comintern, and the notes taken by the delegate of the Shop Stewards' Movement, Jack Tanner ('A Brief Summary of Discussions and Negotiations re Industrial Red International', Jack Tanner Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford, Box 6, File 2, Sheets 59–62). The latter document is a chronology of the discussions following the 16 June conference drawn up by Tanner subsequently, and presumably for the Shop Stewards. It also contains a number of documents on the discussions themselves. It is of course incomplete, since it does not report meetings in which he did not participate for one reason or another.

30 Losowski, *Der internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, p. 46, and *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 16 (in the account of the negotiations in this document long passages are identical to Losowski's text).

for the most part by Lozovsky on the Soviet side.³¹ An additional complication arose from the preparations for the Second Comintern Congress which were starting. These preparations involved, for example, sittings of the ECCI. There was a certain overlap in personnel between the two sets of negotiations; political and organisational differences in one sphere had repercussions on the other. There was still no clear formal separation between the trade-union international and the political international. Reconstructing the course of the discussions is made more difficult by the fact that, owing to their largely informal character, the meetings which now took place were no longer minuted, as the 16 June conference had been.³² But it is possible to trace how things went with reasonable accuracy by using the notes taken by two participants from the Syndicalist and industrial unionist side of the trade-union spectrum, the Spaniard Ángel Pestaña of the CNT, and the Englishman Jack Tanner of the Shop Stewards, in addition to some indications given by Lozovsky.

Lozovsky himself listed the specific points in dispute in the discussions. These points were raised by a large number of delegates: '1. Dictatorship of the proletariat; 2. Politics and the economy; 3. Does the proletariat need a political party?; 4. The relationship with the Third International; 5. Proletariat, state and Soviet system; 6. Should the mass trade unions be split or won over?'³³ What was fundamentally at stake was nothing less than the requirement that all the other trade-union currents adopt the programme and strategy of the Bolsheviks; the trade-union representatives put up tremendous resistance to this idea, and in some cases they were completely unwilling to accept it.

Tanner, who was not at the 16 June conference, at which the agreement between the British, the Italians and the Russians was announced, was surprised to learn that the negotiations had taken place without his knowledge

31 Tomskey was presumably kept too busy by his position as chairman of the Russian trade unions to be able to carry on time-consuming negotiations over specific formulations, and so on. Lozovsky's international experience, as well as his knowledge of foreign languages, was of great advantage in this respect, especially in dealing with the Syndicalists.

32 At least, there are no minutes in either the RILU or the VTsSPS archives. As far as the records of the ECCI and its smaller bureau are concerned, it was only possible to peruse a provisional card index. But this too contained no reference to any relevant materials.

33 Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, p. 46. There is a similar list in *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 16. While Lozovsky's presentation of the trade-union discussions summarises the arguments, Tanner's takes a chronological approach, which means that the standpoints mentioned by Lozovsky emerge at the point at which they were brought into the discussion. In this way the two accounts reciprocally confirm each other's authenticity.

or that of other interested parties. Some of the British and American delegates he spoke to about this had themselves been informed and were in turn surprised that he knew nothing about it. But these were the representatives of parties which had obviously been informed about the course of events by the Comintern's Executive.³⁴ Did the Bolsheviks want to keep the Syndicalists on the sidelines for a while, as it were, so as to be able to arrive at an agreement first with the 'established' leaders of the big trade-union organisations? One is tempted to form this impression.

The negotiations with the Italians (by then Williams and Purcell had already returned to Britain) were in fact to prove extremely wearisome. Alfred Rosmer, who was himself a participant in these discussions, made an accurate assessment years afterwards when he wrote these words about the attitude of the Italian trade-union delegation: 'It would certainly be fair to say that they had come to find reasons for opposing Bolshevism rather than to confirm their party's affiliation to the Third International'. And he added, with particular reference to D'Aragona: 'We were convinced of his insincerity; he was just swimming with the stream ... When he was too hard-pressed by us, he would always go and look for Serrati, who would get him out of the corner we had forced him into'.³⁵

The proposal first put forward by the CGL representatives about the way the agreement of 16 June should be developed started off with a short preamble referring to the inability of the IFTU to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat. It went on to list the following points: any call to leave the trade unions must be condemned; a conference must be called with the purpose of founding a trade-union international independent of the League of Nations and free of social patriots; a bureau of left trade unions must be set up to prepare this conference; further representatives must be brought into this bureau in addition to members of the Russian, Italian and British trade unions, and these people must be taken not just from the trade unions but from the Comintern.³⁶ A resolution of this kind, which did not make programmatic and strategic antagonism towards Amsterdam the basis of the conference, inevitably called forth criticism from Lozovsky. He objected that the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat did not form 'the central point of the agreement between the revolutionary class unions' which was envisaged in the CGL's resolution. The resolution also failed to refer to the affili-

34 Tanner, 'A Brief Summary'.

35 Rosmer 1971, pp. 62-3.

36 This document is in the Tanner Papers, Box 6, File 2, sheets 63-4.

ation of the international trade-union federation to the Comintern.³⁷ Lozovsky and the CGL representatives led by D'Aragona were unable even after long discussions to reach any agreement. Serrati thereupon drew up a compromise resolution which was intended to unify the standpoints of the two sides. But it did not seem clear enough to Lozovsky, even after he had revised it. He finally turned to Lenin, asking him to clarify it. Lenin replied: 'There are, it must be admitted, some unclarities in it, but that is of no importance. First create the centre. Clarity will come later'.³⁸

The Italians had taken up a 'right-wing' standpoint, wanting to oppose too abrupt a break with social-democratic traditions; the arguments of the Syndicalists and Industrial Unionists, on the other hand, came from positions which depended on the postulate of the independence of the revolutionary trade-union movement and were influenced by Anarchist theories.³⁹ Lozovsky met with resistance on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat from them as well as the Italians, but this time the resistance came from the left, since many of the Syndicalists did not question the demand for revolution – that was common ground to everyone – but they did question the need for state power. At least as vehement was their rejection of all notions which rested on the primacy of the party, the subordination of the trade unions to it and lastly the attachment of the trade unions to the Comintern. (On the question of the party, the Bolsheviks could count on the support of trade unions with social-democratic traditions like those from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. But these groups did not carry great weight, while the views of the Bolshevik 'satellite' Georgia, i.e. the communist fraction in the trade unions of Georgia, still ruled by the Mensheviks at this point, can hardly be said to have counted at all). Nevertheless, there were numerous nuances in the Syndicalist attitude on individual questions, as would appear later. These differences of opinion were to lead some of the Syndicalists to move closer to the Bolshevik point of view, a process the Bolsheviks skilfully promoted.

37 Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, pp. 46–7 and 54.

38 This is how Lozovsky reported Lenin's remarks (Losowski 1924b, p. 17). He repeated this story some years later, in essentially similar form: 'Yes, there is in fact a lot of unclarity in it, but we should not break off relations because of this. Simply sign it. The missing clarity will come later' (Losowski 1930, p. 9). This discussion with Lenin presumably took place on 25 June, because there is an official report of a meeting between them on that day (see *VI. Lenin, Biograficheskaja Khronika*, vol. 9, 1977, p. 51).

39 See Lozovsky, *Der Internationale Rat*, pp. 46–8, and *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 16–20.

As far as the concrete course of the discussions with the Syndicalists after 16 June is concerned, the first meeting, as reported by Jack Tanner in his notes, took place on 18 June at the VTsSPS.⁴⁰ (He had already heard rumours of a meeting the previous day, but he was unable to discover the *venue*). This is the only meeting for which he gave the names of all the participants, and his list gives a rough indication of the spectrum of opinions involved, even if some people were still to arrive, while some of those present would not stay. Thirteen people were present on this occasion: Reed, Gilday,⁴¹ Freeman, Beech, Souchy, Tanner, Kamenev, Quelch, McLaine,⁴² Fineberg,⁴³ Mel'nichansky, Lozovsky and Iarotsky. It was a coup for the Syndicalists when they secured the Russian syndicalist Shapiro as their interpreter. The purpose of this meeting, as Lozovsky declared on behalf of the VTsSPS, was to get the opinions of the Syndicalists on the agreement of 16 June. In practical terms, the Syndicalists were expected to present their views about the possible agenda of an international trade-union conference.⁴⁴

On 19 June, Lozovsky was presented with the proposal on which the 'industrial organisations' had agreed in the meantime. Four points were envisaged as forming the basis for an international conference: 1. recognition of the class struggle; 2. the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism; 3. the invitation to the conference to be issued by the Russian trade unions, but the venue to be outside Russia; 4. formation of a preparatory committee to consist of three representatives, one Russian, one Scandinavian and one English. This time the signatories were Tanner, Dick Beech, Paul Freeman, Souchy, a Norwegian, a Swede and Otto Rühle (for the German AAU).⁴⁵

Lozovsky produced a number of objections to this proposal. What they were can probably be deduced from a letter he wrote some days later, which appears

40 The source of the next few paragraphs is Tanner, 'A Brief Summary', unless otherwise stated.

41 Reed and Gilday were the delegates of the Communist Party of the USA. On the basis of their sharp opposition to the AFL trade unions and their orientation towards the rww, and in the absence of a delegate from that organisation, they took the latter's place, so to speak. In his memoirs, however, Gilday describes Charles Phillips, who was delegated to represent the Mexican Communist Party in Moscow in 1920, as a representative of the rww, though doubtless an unofficial one. (See Shipman 1993, p. 107).

42 Quelch and McLaine were delegates of the British Socialist Party.

43 See note 12 above for Fineberg.

44 In the Tanner Papers, there are some handwritten notes on the course of this meeting, clearly written at the time. (Box 6, File 2, Sheets 65–6).

45 The document is in the Tanner Papers, Box 6, File 2, Sheet 67.

to be a reproduction of his comments at this sitting.⁴⁶ There were two things he objected to: first, he criticised the way the syndicalists had formulated their proposed platform, according to which the revolution involved 'the violent overthrow of the state and of capitalism by the application of the dictatorship of the proletarian organisations as a temporary and transitional method on the way to communism'. It was wrong to speak in general terms like this of the 'state'. The dictatorship of the proletariat was also a state. It was impossible to do without a state. A strong proletarian state was needed to suppress the bourgeoisie. It would only wither away in the communist society of the future. The other point on which he had to contradict the signatories of the proposal was their disdain for, or even rejection of, the political struggle and the political party. Just as one cannot separate the political and the economic struggle from each other, so one cannot tear the trade union asunder from the party. This is also true at the international level. The Syndicalists should decide what they want to do. As revolutionaries, they cannot go to Amsterdam. There is a place for them as revolutionaries in the 'Red International of Trade Unions', even if they say there are differences of opinion. These can be resolved within a common framework. The creation of a separate syndicalist international would be doomed to failure, for no international can exist against the land of the proletarian revolution. By making this last point Lozovsky was alluding to the demand of the Syndicalists for an organisation committee consisting of three trade-union representatives. This demand, he said, taken together with the theoretical and programmatic differences of opinion, amounted to a call 'to create an independent international organisation, which would be connected with the Third International more in ideological than organisational terms'. One demand Lozovsky decided not to make, interestingly, was for the trade unions to form 'a section within the Third International',⁴⁷ although there had no doubt already been heated discussions about this. If implemented, it would have meant the subordination of the trade unions to the Comintern. As appeared later, the Bolsheviks were ready to compromise with the syndicalists on this point, if they accepted their views in other matters.

46 Lozovsky's letter is in the Tanner Papers, Box 6, File 2, Sheets 78–9. It is undated, but it was written after the meeting of the VTsSPS Presidium on 23 June, as this is referred to in the text. In Tanner's chronology of events there is an entry under 25 June according to which he was advised that the Russian would make a detailed statement of his position. There is no later reference to the actual reception of the statement, however. These facts all suggest that the letter was written on 25–26 June. Lozovsky later made much use of it for his account in the pamphlet *Der Internationale Rat*.

47 Lozovsky's formulation in Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, p. 54.

On 21 June, the Executive Committee of the Comintern met, its number increased by many delegates who had already arrived to take part in the Second Comintern Congress. At this meeting Tanner gave a detailed report on the Shop Stewards' Movement. In the evening there was a further meeting of the syndicalists with Lozovsky, at which there was again an inconclusive clash between their long-established and divergent standpoints. Lozovsky finally stated that the Russian trade-union leadership wanted to discuss the questions involved.

The presidium of the VTsSPS examined the question of the proper basis for an international trade-union congress at its 23 June sitting. Lozovsky was instructed to continue working out the formula for the invitation to the congress with the Italians, on the one hand, and the syndicalists, on the other. On the many differences of opinion with both sides, the text of the resolution only contained the remark that neither the question of organising the trade-union international as a section of the Comintern nor the question of the location of the congress should be posed in an ultimative way. The resolution also made clear the areas where no concessions were to be made. In the negotiations, Lozovsky was instructed 'always to defend the fundamental principles of the Russian trade union movement'.⁴⁸ On 25 June, Lozovsky had his meeting with Lenin, mentioned earlier, at which the definitive text of the agreement with the Italians, based on the compromise formulated in the meantime by Serrati, would probably have been discussed.

As early as 26 June, a Comintern employee was able to hand Tanner a new Russian-Italian text, with the request that the syndicalists also append their signatures. They discussed this the next day, and decided that they would need to speak to the Italians. When Tanner visited them in their room he made an unwelcome discovery: Lozovsky was already with them, working out draft statutes for the international bureau, although the basis for an international agreement was still supposed to be under discussion. Tanner reacted to this as might be expected: 'I spoke very directly to him about this deception'. But his protest could not alter the fact that a far-reaching degree of consensus had already been achieved, and that unless the syndicalists decided to remain aloof, all they could do was by and large accept what had been agreed. Finally, a joint meeting between the syndicalists, the Russians and the Italians was arranged for the following day, 28 June.

But before this could happen, there was a discussion within the Comintern framework, in other words a sitting of the ECCI. This took place the next morn-

48 *Otchet VTsSPS 1920–1921* 1921, p. 198.

ing. Not only was it attended by many of the people involved in the trade-union discussions; the discussions themselves were a theme of the meeting, at which the CNT was entitled to be present, on the basis of its decision to join the Comintern. The place reserved for the CNT was now occupied by Pestaña, who had arrived in Moscow on the previous day.⁴⁹ Lozovsky introduced the debate by presenting the text agreed with the Italians, which called for the creation of an alternative to Amsterdam. He named a number of further signatories: the Bulgarian and Yugoslav representatives and the representatives of the Bolshevik fraction of the Georgian trade unions. His declaration was greeted with objections and protests from the syndicalists, as was to be expected. Tanner took exception to a passage instructing revolutionaries not to leave the reformist trade unions. He was supported by Souchy and Pestaña. Tanner wanted the revolutionary factory and trade-union organisations to be allotted equal rights in the dictatorship of the proletariat, so that it was not restricted exclusively to the communist party. But Souchy and Pestaña, with their anarchist background, rejected a dictatorship of the proletariat in principle. They also refused to accept the proposed subordination of the trade unions to the party and the Comintern.

This line of argument in turn caused D'Aragona and Serrati to protest against the syndicalists. A homogeneous international was needed, they said. Turning to the Shop Stewards and the IWW, Serrati pointed out that they represented only a minority in comparison with the AFL and the TUC. Shablin peremptorily demanded that the syndicalists accept the dictatorship of the proletariat and the hegemony of the party in the revolution. In view of these sharp argumentative clashes, Bolshevik speakers like Zinoviev, Radek and Bukharin endeavoured to stop the cleavages between the different sides from going any deeper. The different currents in the revolutionary workers' movement must work together and complement each other, they said. One should not follow the opportunists of the Second International and separate the party and the trade unions from each other. In any case, they believed there were signs that more and more syndicalists were accepting the necessity of political action. Finally, any further discussion of the text was postponed until the meeting of trade-union delegates scheduled for the evening.

49 Pestaña provided information on the course of this ECCI sitting in the first part of his report to the CNT, compiled after his return to Spain (Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 23–33). There are also some details in Cachin 1993, pp. 506–11, and Rosmer 1971, pp. 38–40. Tanner mentions this meeting in his chronology without saying anything about the debates.

The evening discussion again took up the thread of the morning's debate. The cut and thrust of the arguments continued, without altering the fact that the discussion was going round and round in circles. Tanner described the course of events as 'the usual procedure'. Lozovsky made one concession at least. He accepted that Pestaña had been right to protest at the ECCI sitting against a phrase in the text in which it was stated that the apolitical (syndicalist) trade-union leaders had become lackeys of imperialism during the war. Not only was it wrong to apply this description to the CNT, it was also inapplicable to the syndicalist trade unions of Portugal and South America. It was therefore agreed that this passage would be altered, and Lozovsky accepted this.⁵⁰ Pestaña now made a declaration that despite all his objections, he would feel himself obliged to agree to the resolution if it obtained a majority, in view of the decision of the CNT congress to join the Third International. If, like the CNT, one were a member of the Third International, one would have in the last resort to accept the decisions of the majority. Nevertheless the CNT would certainly want to go through all these arguments once more after his return to Spain.⁵¹

The meetings seem to have continued for a few more days. On 30 June, Tanner once more produced a proposal,⁵² which was constructed on the lines of the text presented by Lozovsky, but took account of the arguments of the syndicalists. The dictatorship of the proletariat was defined there as a 'dictatorship of the revolutionary proletarian organisations as a temporary and transitional method'. To leave the reformist trade unions was only 'inadvisable' where there existed 'no revolutionary, syndicalist or industrial organisations'. An international conference should meet as quickly as possible in Italy or Scandinavia, to be organised by a committee consisting of five representatives (two for the Latin trade unions, and one each for the German-Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon

50 See Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 36–7. There he accused Lozovsky of 'unforgivable disloyalty', in particular because when in the middle of July the resolution was definitely adopted, he came back to this point again and Lozovsky explicitly assured him that the passage had been altered (p. 39). He was mistaken here, however, just as he was in regard to the Twenty One Conditions (see the next chapter), for Lozovsky's formulation was in line with the text. This referred in so many words to the trade unions in 'most of the countries that participated in the war', which can hardly have meant the syndicalist organisations in neutral Spain or neutral Latin America (Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, p. 74). Rosmer 1971, p. 39, also mentions this intervention by Pestaña, which he says he supported (although he makes Radek the protagonist rather than Lozovsky, no doubt because of a memory lapse).

51 See Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 35–6.

52 Tanner Papers, Box 6, File 2, Sheet 71.

and Russian trade unions).⁵³ It is patently obvious that a platform of this type would have placed the Bolsheviks in a minority in both programmatic and organisational terms, and ensured syndicalist domination over the trade-union discussions.

Tanner's endeavours to find common ground could only end in failure. It was symptomatic that a meeting scheduled for the evening of 30 June did not take place. Lozovsky had waited in a different room from that occupied by the other delegates, because of a misunderstanding. The next day the majority of the delegates, above all those from France and Italy, set off under Lozovsky's supervision, just as the British had done a month before, on a journey through Russia. Like the British delegates before them, they travelled down the Volga to Saratov. 'Everything is at a standstill now', as Tanner noted. They did not return to Moscow until 13 July (according to Cachin), or 14 July (according to Pestaña).⁵⁴

No attempt seems to have been made in the intervening period to bridge the differences of opinion. On 30 June, the day before the journey down the Volga began, the Presidium of the VTsSPS again discussed the position, but it was already thinking of the organisation of the future congress. The minutes of the meeting list three resolutions: firstly, the international association of trade unions should have the title 'International Trade Union Council'; secondly, representation at the international trade-union congress would follow the principle of proportionality (this decision had already been made in advance and would be reaffirmed at the founding congress of the RILU); and thirdly, the congress would meet in Russia. To say this meant abandoning the readiness to make concessions on this question they had displayed a week earlier.⁵⁵ It would not be wrong to assume that this change of line expressed the Bolsheviks' apprehension that if the congress assembled outside Russia it would be impossible to control it.

53 This proposal to set up an organising committee should probably be viewed against the hidden background of material disagreements among the syndicalists themselves. Murphy, another Shop Stewards' Movement delegate, also presented his own proposal on 30 June. This envisaged the creation of a bureau, which would in practice act as an international leadership. Tanner replied 'that I did not agree with this and that the question of a bureau should be left to the conference'. All that was necessary was a committee to organise the conference. What both proposals had in common, however, was that neither Murphy's 'bureau' nor Tanner's 'organising committee' owed any allegiance to the Comintern.

54 See Cachin's notes (1993, pp. 513–55), which give his impressions of various visits and also reproduce conversations he had with other delegates, and Pestaña 1924, pp. 43–59.

55 *Otchet VTsSPS 1920–1921* 1921, p. 198.

Meanwhile, the preparatory work continued. This is shown by a note set down by Lenin, in English, in the first half of July, presumably after a discussion with an English trade unionist.⁵⁶ The note expresses the view that the proposed International Council must have more autonomy and be given its own resources. The remark 'not through the CI, not through the VTsSPS' surely means that it should not appear as emanating from Russia. This was clearly Lenin's reaction to the fierce resistance of the syndicalists, which the Bolsheviks had not expected. He also listed the names of people who could be on the bureau of the International Council (Tomsky as General Secretary, Murphy, Rosmer, Jansen,⁵⁷ Nedialkov-Shablin and, in brackets, Lozovsky).

Whatever work was done on the concrete details of the establishment of the International Trade Union Council did not alter the fact that the die had already been cast with regard to its political and organisational basis. On 14 July, after his return to Moscow, Lozovsky reported to the Presidium of the VTsSPS about the state of the negotiations.⁵⁸ This sitting reached the conclusion, against the opposition of Mel'nichansky, who was the sole advocate of forming a bloc with the IWW and similar organisations, presumably on the basis of his American experience, that it would be impossible to agree a common platform with syndicalist opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat.⁵⁹ The trade-union delegates then met once again.⁶⁰ Lozovsky informed this meeting that since they had so far failed to reach agreement, it had been decided to limit contributions to members of organisations which had already officially joined the Comintern. This applied to the representatives of Russia, Yugoslavia, Italy, Georgia, Bulgaria, France and Spain. With the exception of the

56 Printed in *Leninskii Sbornik*, vol. 37, Moscow, 1970, pp. 220–1. The date, as given in that publication, was 'not earlier than 3 July and not later than 19 July'. The authors of *V.I. Lenin, Biograficheskaya Khronika* 1977, vol. 9, mention this note on p. 78, but were unable to fit it to any particular discussion. The language used would suggest an English-speaking interlocutor. In his memoirs, J.T. Murphy mentions a meeting with Lenin, Tomsky and Lozovsky for the purpose of organising the International Trade Union Council, but he dates it after the Second Comintern Congress (Murphy 1941, p. 160). But the proposal drawn up at the end of June, mentioned by Tanner, shows that he was already involved with organising the International Trade Union Council some time before the Second Congress.

57 A Dutch communist.

58 *Otchet VTsSPS 1920–1921* 1921, p. 199.

59 Tomsky, who had supported Lozovsky on the issue, referred to this discussion in his report of 16 October 1920 to a meeting of the communist fraction in the VTsSPS (Tomsky 1928, pp. 52–73, here pp. 60–1).

60 On this, see Pestaña 1924, pp. 38–40.

Spaniard Pestaña, they had all already announced their agreement to the draft declaration setting up the International Council. Lozovsky informed Pestaña that his proposal to alter the passage about the attitude of the syndicalists during the world war had been incorporated into the draft. When he again proposed the removal of the phrases about the dictatorship of the proletariat and the seizure of power, Lozovsky told him he could make no concessions on that point. There was no dispute about most of the provisions in the statutes and regulations of the proposed International Council. Discussions did arise on the following points: the date on which the international trade-union congress should be held; where it should be held; and whether invitations to the congress should be restricted to trade unions which supported the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the date, Lozovsky's original proposal of 15 November was considered to be too early, and it was finally decided that the congress should meet on 1 January 1921. On the place, Pestaña suggested Sweden or Italy, but Lozovsky proposed Russia, since the Russian delegates could not travel abroad. He eventually won the day on this point. The rule that only trade unions which supported the dictatorship of the proletariat should be allowed to take part in the congress caused a greater degree of disagreement. Pestaña complained that this made the political framework for possible participants excessively narrow. After all, they wanted as many people as possible to participate, even people who had different views about the dictatorship of the proletariat. But here too he was in a minority. After that issue was settled, on 15 July 1920,⁶¹ the International Trade Union Council (ITUC)⁶² was founded. That meant in practice that there was now a new trade-union international in existence to confront the IFTU.

The founding proclamation⁶³ started with a long preamble outlining the background to the foundation of the ITUC. The situation of the proletariat since the end of the war increasingly required it to have a clear leadership. The fight must be conducted internationally in the framework of industrial rather than

61 The date is given by Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, p. 61; it is also in *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, p. 22.

62 In the earliest documents there are a number of different names for the organisation, such as 'Provisional International Council' and 'International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions'. Because they all seemed too long, they were gradually elided into 'International Trade Union Council', which is the name used in this work (except of course in quotations from the earliest documents).

63 Printed in Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, pp. 58–60 and 74–5, and also in *Bericht des internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 21–2, with slight variations owing to differences in translation [English: *Workers of the World*, 1991, appendix 4b, pp. 935–6].

craft associations. Mere reforms would not solve the situation. During the war, most of the trade-union leaders, who until then had declared themselves politically neutral or apolitical, had become supporters of imperialism. It was the duty of the working class to combine the trade unions together to form a revolutionary federation, and to work hand in hand with the political organisations. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie must be confronted with the dictatorship of the proletariat; this alone could break the resistance of capitalism. The IFTU was incapable of performing any of these tasks.

Three conclusions were drawn from these arguments. Firstly, withdrawal from the trade unions was firmly condemned. Instead of withdrawing from the trade unions, they should drive the 'opportunists' out of them. Secondly, communist cells should be formed in all trade unions. Thirdly, and lastly, an International Trade Union Council should be set up 'in order to direct the process of the revolutionising of the trade union movement', consisting of representatives of the affiliated unions, and it must act in close collaboration with the Comintern. This closeness was expressed by reciprocal representation between the International Trade Union Council and the ECCI.

This proclamation was signed by Lozovsky for the Russian VTsSPS, D'Aragona for the Italian CGL, Nedialkov-Shablin for the General Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Bulgaria, Mikadze for the communist minority of the Georgian trade unions, Ilija Milkić for the Yugoslav trade unions, Pestaña for the CNT and Rosmer for the *Comités syndicalistes révolutionnaires*, the minority in the French CGT. One thing that was missing was at least a reference to the two British participants in the 16 June discussion, namely Williams and Purcell. Lozovsky and D'Aragona sent them a telegram immediately after 15 July. Although Williams and Purcell had granted full powers to them previously, Lozovsky and D'Aragona wanted to ask what attitude they and their organisations now had towards the International Trade Union Council, because the text of the declaration was now different from the one presented originally. But Moscow did not receive an answer to this question.⁶⁴ Both Williams and Purcell were extremely reserved about responding. As stated earlier, they both commented on the report of the British delegation to Russia at the TUC congress of 6–11 September, and they also explained the difficulties the Russian trade unions had in accepting the TUC's invitation to visit Britain (see chapter 3, section 4, on this). But they did not mention that an International Trade Union Council had been founded.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, they were both involved in the establish-

64 The text of the telegram is printed in Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, p. 62.

65 *Report of the Proceedings of the TUC, 1920*, pp. 237–8, 260–9, and 288–9.

ment of the Communist Party of Great Britain and then in December in the creation of a British Bureau of the Council.⁶⁶

On the other hand, the proclamation did not receive the signatures of some of those present at the meeting. The following people refused to sign, because of material disagreements with the text: the 'industrialist' delegates of the IWW from several countries, the Shop Stewards, and, among the syndicalists, Souchy, who represented the FAUD. As it turned out, however, as soon as the Council began its work they took part in it. They were clearly confident that they would be able to gain acceptance for their particular views later on, at the planned congress, since they were in agreement with the actual purpose of the founding proclamation, which was the creation of a revolutionary trade-union international. A definitive clarification of their future course of action would have to take place after their return from Moscow within the organisations located in this part of the ideological spectrum.

The aims of the Council were laid down in very general terms in its statutes.⁶⁷ First of all, the document set certain programmatic goals, the same as had already been outlined in the foundation proclamation; in addition to these, it mentioned the organisation of international strikes and solidarity actions,⁶⁸ the collection of information on the international workers' movement, its distribution among the member organisations, and the issuing of publications. The Council was to consist of one representative for each of the seven founding unions and one representative of the ECCI. Trade unions which joined the organisation in the future would also be entitled to one representative each. An executive committee of three persons was elected for day-to-day work; this committee must include the General Secretary and the Comintern's representative. The statutes also contained provisions on the publication of a press organ, on the way the planned conference was to be organised (the determination of criteria for admission such as recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proportion of delegates from each trade union, the representation of national centres, individual trade unions and international trade secretariats, and finally a special invitation to participate which was to be sent to the syndicalists and the 'industrialists') and the seat of the Council. It was decided that the starting date for the conference would be 1 January 1921. The

66 The composition of the Bureau was mentioned at a meeting of the Council on 28 February 1921 (RGASPI 432/3/2/21). Strangely enough, Murphy's list of members of the Bureau, given in his memoirs, includes Williams but not Purcell (Murphy 1941, pp. 167–8).

67 Printed in Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, pp. 75–7, and in *Bericht des internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 116.

68 This section on international actions is missing from Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*.

relationship between the Council and the executive bureau was regulated by a supplement to the statutes, which determined that the General Secretary must be one of the members of the bureau, and also how often the Council should meet, and so on. There was also a set of regulations for the Council which laid down a quorum for its capacity to conduct business, and prescribed the way the sittings should proceed.⁶⁹

Thus the political and organisational basis for the Council was laid by the foundation proclamation and the statutes. In addition to this, a manifesto, dated 1 August, was issued, appealing to 'the trade unions of all countries'.⁷⁰ This emphatically condemned class collaboration and attacked the policy pursued by the Amsterdam trade-union international since the war. Amsterdam supported the League of Nations, a body which guaranteed the exploitation of the workers, the manifesto said. The boycott of Hungary just announced by the IFTU was only a 'weak effort' and its actual aim was to reach a compromise with Horthy. Similarly, the IFTU had never issued any emphatic condemnation of the Entente's intervention on the side of the Whites in the Russian Civil War. Hence, a 'centre of the revolutionary trade union class movement' had been set up in Moscow on 15 July as an alternative to the IFTU. The International Trade Union Council and the International Federation of Trade Unions stood on different sides of the barricade, and 'it would not be difficult for an honest revolutionary, or for the proletariat, to make a choice'.

The emotional tone of the manifesto expressed its authors' continuing expectation that the revolutionary movement would prove irresistible. Two weeks later, in fact, Lozovsky wrote an analysis of the origins of the International Trade Union Council in which he claimed that just as the Second International was disintegrating with every day that passed, so also the fate of the IFTU was sealed: 'The Amsterdam trade union federation is doomed to decay and disintegration'.⁷¹ Lozovsky's optimism was fired up yet further by his very

69 Both the supplement to the statute and the Council's regulations are included in *Bericht des internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 116–17.

70 Printed in Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, pp. 77–80, and in *Bericht des internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 124–7.

71 Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, p. 63. This pamphlet was written between 8 and 12 August 1920, while Lozovsky was travelling from Petrograd to Murmansk, on the first stage of the Russian trade-union delegation's journey abroad (see chapter 3, section 4). When he reached Christiania, on 9 September, Lozovsky added a postscript, and in Berlin, finally, he provided a foreword, dated 18 October, and handed over the manuscript to be printed. It was the first large-scale publication presenting the Trade Union Council to the foreign public.

generous estimate of the Trade Union Council's actual influence in comparison with Amsterdam's. He arrived at a figure of 9 million members organised by the Council. If one added to that the other independent revolutionary organisations in the world, one would even reach 10 million. This contrasted with the 18 million members of the IFTU, and a considerable number even of those people would sympathise with Moscow. And this was the situation after just a few weeks. In calculating the Council's influence, of course, Lozovsky did not take into account the specific situation which was responsible for the figure of 5 million members in Russia. Moreover, even if the estimate of 800,000 members of the CNT and 700,000 members of the CGT minority made by Lozovsky is not considered too high, it should have already been clear to him, in view of the manoeuvres of the CGL representatives in Moscow, that one could not simply count all the 2 million members of the CGL as being affiliated to Moscow's Trade Union Council. This fact soon became apparent.⁷²

So far, the proclamations made by the International Trade Union Council had not proved entirely satisfactory to the Bolsheviks. Lozovsky himself criticised the foundation proclamation for its failure to include a clear denunciation of the Amsterdam trade-union leaders. Instead of this, it did no more than 'give a general indication of the need to drive the opportunists out of the leading organs of the trade union movement'.⁷³ The manifesto of 1 August was at least unambiguous in this respect. In other words, it did denounce the IFTU and its leaders. But a more serious failing of the ITUC was its inability to put into effect one of the principles the Bolsheviks had laid down earlier: 'The main deficiency' of the ITUC, according to Lozovsky, 'is an inadequate clarification of its relationship to the Third International'.⁷⁴ The original Bolshevik proposal, made a few months before, had been to set up a trade-union section within the Comintern. At that time, they had rejected the idea of a separate trade-union international. Now they were in the process of founding an organisation of precisely that kind.

The establishment of the International Trade Union Council in this concrete form was certainly the accidental consequence of the range of organisations represented in Moscow and the nature of their demands. But in view of the prestige of the Bolsheviks and the October Revolution, it is perfectly possible to speculate that the presence of a different group of representatives in Moscow would have resulted in a different kind of organisation. Of course, one should

72 For the membership calculations, Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 61–3.

73 Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*, Berlin, 1920, p. 60.

74 Ibid.

also note that the Bolsheviks always deliberately aimed to bring together all revolutionary trade unionists, in whatever form possible. Even so, the organisation of political forces, the development of mass parties as sections of the Third International, was a much more important project for them, and this was the task which was on the agenda at the Second Comintern Congress.

The reason for the Bolsheviks' readiness to make concessions was very clear. Lenin's note, mentioned above, gave the explanation: the different trade-union organisations which sympathised with the Russian Revolution were ready to co-ordinate their efforts with each other and with the Bolsheviks, but they were unwilling simply to subordinate themselves to an organisation under their leadership. Hence the Bolsheviks had acted according to the watchword formulated by Lenin in his discussion with Lozovsky about Serrati's proposed platform: first create a centre on the basis being offered, and then continue to negotiate over the way it should develop. This involved a more precise determination of the relationship between the International Trade Union Council (or, to give it its later title, the Red International of Labour Unions) and the Comintern. This discussion was to last until the second congress of the RILU in 1922, and it was affected to a considerable extent both by the development of syndicalist opinions and the changing attitude of the Bolsheviks to the Syndicalists. In any case, the confrontation of opinions which had emerged during the establishment of the International Trade Union Council continued to be a feature of the situation, as the Second Comintern Congress, which followed shortly afterwards, was to show.

2 A Sequel: The Second Comintern Congress and the Trade-Union Question

The Second Comintern Congress⁷⁵ was ceremonially opened in Petrograd on 19 July 1920. The delegates had assembled in Moscow, but they were then brought to Petrograd in special trains. The Petrograd part of the proceedings

75 The minutes of the congress were printed in German in *Der zweite Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale. Protokoll der Verhandlungen vom 19. Juli in Petrograd und vom 23. Juli bis 7. August 1920 in Moskau*, Hamburg, 1921. [English version: *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*, edited by John Riddell, 2 vols., London, 1991]. The course of the congress is depicted in the following works: Lazitch and Drachkovitch 1972, pp. 271–365; Resis 1964, pp. 50–68 (with particular attention to the discussion on the trade-union question); Groppo 1991, pp. 113–33; and on the Syndicalists, Thorpe 1989, pp. 134–45.

was entirely dominated by declarations of solidarity with Soviet Russia, which continued to be at war, both with Poland and with Wrangel, and by reciprocal acts of homage paid by the delegates to the cradle of the Russian Revolution and by the inhabitants of the city to the delegates.⁷⁶ The delegates then returned to Moscow. But before they were able to start work on the actual agenda of the congress, the ECCI had already met (on 21 and 22 July) to clarify various questions about the way the proceedings should be conducted.⁷⁷

All the differences of opinion which subsequently dominated the congress had already come to the surface in these sittings of the ECCI. These were not merely questions of organisation. The Americans, led by Reed, called on 21 July for the English language to be given equal status with French and German as the working languages in the congress. They failed in this attempt. Although English was rejected for purely technical reasons – a lack of interpreters – this decision immediately seemed to poison the atmosphere, since the Americans, who had their own very definite views on the trade-union question, considered that their effectiveness was thereby reduced. They also wanted the trade-union question to be discussed right at the start, because it was particularly important, they thought. Here too they failed. For the Bolsheviks, the party was the decisive problem. They pushed through their own proposed agenda, in which the party was the first point to be dealt with.

The conflict over the admission of delegates was still more significant. Which delegates were to receive full, 'deliberative' voting rights, and which merely 'consultative' rights? This affected several groups of delegates. It affected the representatives of 'sympathising' parties, both from the social-democratic part of the spectrum, such as the USPD and from the communist part, such as the dissidents from the KPD who had set up the KAPD. But it also concerned the syndicalists and the 'industrialists'. While the USPD problem was solved in a harmonious fashion by the agreement that they would receive 'consultative' rights, the other cases led to serious clashes.

The intention of the Bolsheviks was to achieve the broadest possible combination of all revolutionary tendencies (which is why the Syndicalists were again explicitly invited). Whereas the USPD first needed to develop towards communism, the task in dealing with the 'ultra-left' delegates was to convince them of the correct tactics. The Bolsheviks therefore proposed to give them full voting rights at the congress. This led to a dramatic confrontation with Paul

76 See the descriptions of the atmosphere in Petrograd in Rosmer 1971, pp. 65–8; Pestaña 1922a, pp. 48–9; Cachin 1993, pp. 567–74.

77 The fullest information on these two sittings of the ECCI is to be found in Cachin 1993, pp. 576–89. There are also some indications in Rosmer 1971, pp. 79–81.

Levi, the chairman of the KPD. The admission of the KAPD to the Second Congress was an inflammatory matter for him. After all, he had himself been the prime mover in the exclusion of its founders from the KPD. But when the KAPD issue became bound up with the question of the admission of the Shop Stewards and the IWW the conflict increased in complexity and seriousness. Looking back some months later, Zinoviev said that 'agitated' debates had taken place on these issues.⁷⁸

As a result the discussion broadened out into a general examination of the appropriate attitude towards syndicalism. The Bolsheviks had of course absolutely no intention of taking up syndicalist or anarchist theories. On the contrary, they were not ready to make the slightest concession on that point. The course of the Second Congress would confirm this. But they did want to win over as many revolutionaries as possible, as was stressed by Bolshevik speakers like Zinoviev and Bukharin.⁷⁹ What they wanted to prevent was something Cachin described in his diary as an imminent development: a Comintern version of the 'London Congress'.⁸⁰ This referred to the expulsion of the anarchists by the social-democratic majority at the congress of the Second International

78 G. Sinowjew, 'Zwei Wege', *KI*, no. 13, 1920, pp. 260–65, here p. 260. Zinoviev's article was a lengthy commentary composed after the end of the Comintern congress, in which he once more gave a detailed justification of the Bolsheviks' attitude towards the Syndicalists, also referring back to this sitting of the ECCI.

79 As Zinoviev wrote in the above article ('Zwei Wege', pp. 262–3): 'We must not act in the same way as the Second International, which was only able to persecute, insult and hound the working-class elements which made opposition to it from the left. We have cast aside this shameful tradition of the Second International. We are perfectly well aware that the supporters of revolutionary syndicalism and industrialism, and the English Shop Stewards, who regard themselves as being in radical opposition to us, are in reality by no means "more radical" than the communists ... But we should be hopeless doctrinaires if we did not recognise that we must be able, *despite all these prejudices*, to approach the truly revolutionary proletarian currents which are engaged in a serious fight against the bourgeoisie, are imbued with hatred for the bourgeois system, and are ready seriously and honestly to struggle together with us for the proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power ... Two paths are open to us: either we turn into an international of the "pure", i.e. in reality an international of pettifoggers and sectarians, who are unable to comprehend the soul of the workers' movement, or we move forward still more decisively on the path laid out for us by the First Congress of the Communist International, i.e. we draw over to our side the best part of the revolutionary syndicalists, anarchists, industrialists and factory council supporters.'

80 Cachin 1993, p. 578. Cachin's political past makes it likely that an occurrence of this kind would not have been unwelcome to him.

held in London in 1896, which sealed the definitive divorce of the two currents in the international working-class movement.

The Bolsheviks therefore wanted the Syndicalists to participate in decision-making at the Second Congress in order to facilitate a *rapprochement* with them. As was pointed out in the discussion, the ECCI had already set a precedent by admitting Pestaña – who represented the CNT – and Rosmer – who represented the Committee for the Third International, which included Syndicalists as well as Socialists – to its deliberations on their arrival in Moscow in June, and giving them voting rights.

In objecting to this, Levi found support above all from Radek and Serrati. In his later account of the dispute, Rosmer characterised Levi and Radek as typical anti-syndicalists in the tradition of the Second International: ‘Paul Levi ... loathed all anarchists and syndicalists *en bloc*; they were elements of an “opposition” which permanently obsessed him.’⁸¹ Rosmer describes Radek’s attitude to the trade-union question in this way: ‘He approached this difficult problem with the mentality of a German Social Democrat, for whom the subordinate role of the trade unions was an established fact about which any further discussion was pointless.’⁸² Serrati’s objections, on the other hand, were not based on grounds of principle. ‘He found it unacceptable that the International should cordially welcome anarchist and syndicalist groupings while it constantly formulated various demands in regard to an important party like his own.’⁸³ There was also another Italian who spoke out against what in his eyes was an impermissible mixture of Marxism and syndicalism: Amadeo Bordiga. Unlike Levi, Radek and Serrati, Bordiga stood on the ‘ultra-left’ wing of the Comintern and his aim here was simply to make sure that communist principles were firmly adhered to where programmatic and theoretical questions were at stake.

Eventually the Bolsheviks secured a big majority for their line of approach. This meant that the political principle of an alliance with the Syndicalists was now confirmed. Levi had threatened the departure of the KPD delegation if this happened, but ironically the KPD delegates were saved from having to do this by the KAPD’s representatives, who themselves decided to walk out of the congress. They had objections of principle, they said, to the statement laid

81 Rosmer 1971, p. 81. On page 29 of this work, in describing his first meeting with Levi in Berlin when he was on his way to Moscow, he even writes that the way he constantly attacked the KAPD during the conversation was ‘almost like a persecution mania’.

82 Rosmer 1970, vol. 1, p. 119. There is a similar comment in Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, p. 64: ‘Radek is a rabid anti-syndicalist’.

83 Rosmer 1970, vol. 1, p. 133. In particular, the Comintern leaders demanded the expulsion of the reformist wing of the PSI.

before the congress by the Comintern leaders.⁸⁴ Although the conflict between Levi and the Comintern leaders could be smoothed over temporarily, it would break out again in the coming months; the issue in dispute continued to be what Levi diagnosed as the excessively indulgent attitude of the Bolsheviks towards syndicalism.

A further problem which concerned the 'trade union complex' blazed up even before the congress (ending in a dramatic scene shortly after the session began).⁸⁵ The Italian socialist delegation left Italy before the news had arrived that a Second Congress of the Comintern was about to take place. It had therefore sent a telegram from Moscow asking for mandates to attend it. The chairman of the trade-union confederation, D'Aragona, was not one of the three people who received a mandate from the PSI in Rome. Thanks to Serrati's mediation, he and three other members of the Italian delegation were granted a 'consultative voice'. Serrati also tried to include D'Aragona in the trade-union commission of the congress, but this met with resistance from two delegates who belonged to the communist wing of the PSI, because he did not have voting rights. They also said that he had no mandate from the CGL, and in any case that organisation had not yet left the IFTU or joined the Comintern. Serrati replied that D'Aragona's signature appended to the foundation proclamation of the International Trade Union Council had automatically made the CGL a member of the Comintern, and he could also report that the telegram from the PSI contained the information that the CGL regarded D'Aragona as its delegate at the Comintern congress. On hearing this, the congress decided that it could recognise his mandate, provided that he confirmed the withdrawal of the CGL from the IFTU in writing. D'Aragona, however, did not feel he was empowered to do this. Despite his refusal, Serrati, who was a member of the presidium of the congress, recognised him as the Italian representative on the trade-union commission. This led in turn to a clash with the other Italian delegates, who complained to the two Russian members of the presidium, Lenin and Zinoviev. The latter then overruled Serrati. D'Aragona accordingly withdrew from the congress and returned to Italy with a number of members of the Italian delegation who supported him.⁸⁶ This was the way the breach between

84 See Goldbach 1973, pp. 64–5 and Bock 1993, pp. 254–6, on the conflict with Levi and its consequences.

85 The details in the next paragraph are from König 1967, pp. 95–6.

86 This dispute was not mentioned at all at the congress itself. The minutes of the congress include D'Aragona as a member of the commission on the trade-union question (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 789) [English: Riddell 1991, p. 845]. The account given here depends entirely on König's account. His source is a report in an Italian communist

the CGL and the International Trade Union Council started, although it is doubtful whether the CGL's participation in it was ever seriously meant on the part of D'Aragona, rather than being just a result of the pressure exerted by the 'revolutionary atmosphere' in Moscow.

On the very first day of the working session of the congress, the 23 July, John Reed again attempted an intervention on the trade-union question 'in the name of 29 comrades'. This time he wanted the question to be placed at a later point in the agenda, since it required a thorough discussion, which meant that the many relevant texts had first to be read. Again he failed.⁸⁷ The trade-union question was now due to be taken at point two of the agreed agenda (out of a total of 11 items). But even before it could be discussed systematically, the syndicalists had already made their presence felt by stating their views on the fundamental questions of principle.

The first point on the agenda, introduced by Zinoviev, was the role of the communist party. This set off an immediate passage of arms between the syndicalists and the Bolsheviks on the issue.⁸⁸ Whereas Zinoviev stressed the need for a revolutionary party and attacked the theories of the syndicalists, which were admittedly more progressive than the bankrupt Second International, but were at present completely reactionary, Pestaña, Tanner and Souchy described the establishment of a political party as superfluous. Revolutionary trade unions were the essential instrument of the proletarian struggle. The bourgeoisie also knew this, which is why they persecuted syndicalists with such ferocity. In their replies, Lenin⁸⁹ and Trotsky tried to build bridges for the syndicalists. The latter's conception of the active role of 'resolute minorities' was not very different from the Bolshevik conception of a vanguard communist party, said Trotsky. The syndicalists misunderstood the word 'party'

newspaper. After he left, D'Aragona was twice described at the congress by Zinoviev as the quintessence of a reformist trade-union leader (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 385 and 637) [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 412 and 729].

87 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 58–9 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 142]. For example, the ECCI had already issued several theses on this question before the congress met. They were published in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 11, 1920, pp. 5–27 and no. 12, 1920, pp. 10–53.

88 The discussion is printed in *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 59–99 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 156–78]. There is a short account of it, giving the arguments deployed, in Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 49–56.

89 During Tanner's speech Lenin made a note, containing among other things the remark that the speech demonstrated graphically 'that a place must be created within the Third International for sympathisers' (Lenin 1973, p. 194).

because they always linked it with the notion of a social-democratic parliamentary party. Trotsky once again explicitly reminded them of his close collaboration with the group around Rosmer and Monatte after the beginning of the war.

The Bureau of the congress then proposed the setting up of a commission, headed by Zinoviev, to examine his theses. Significantly, not one of the syndicalist spokesmen was elected to this commission, and just one delegate from the Shop Stewards' Movement, who had not spoken against Zinoviev's theses in the debate.⁹⁰ It is therefore not surprising that Zinoviev could report the next day that the revised theses had been adopted unanimously.⁹¹ The commission had supplemented the text with passages directed against the views of the syndicalists and entirely in line with the arguments of the Bolsheviks. The congress then unanimously confirmed Zinoviev's theses.⁹² They were a detailed justification of the need for a party organised on the basis of democratic centralism. The party must also be active in the broad mass organisations of the workers. The theses thereby also indirectly confirmed the principle of working in existing trade unions.⁹³

But before the congress had heard the report of Zinoviev's commission and voted on his theses, its future mode of procedure had been modified. In order to save time, the Bureau of the congress proposed to set up five commissions to examine all the draft theses.⁹⁴ Only when the commissions had reported would the theses be discussed in the plenary session. Since the discussions in the trade-union commission took a very controversial course and lasted a long time, the treatment of this point in the plenary session was accidentally postponed to the end of the proceedings, in line with Reed's original proposal

90 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 99 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 178].

91 The revised theses are printed in *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 103–13 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 182–90].

92 This unanimity is surprising, since the syndicalist representatives had full voting rights. The minutes unfortunately do not give any explanation, but it is probable that some, like Rosmer, were on their way to adopting the Bolshevik standpoint anyway, while others followed the example of Pestaña, who abstained (although this is not recorded in the minutes). He explained his abstention to the CNT by saying that since this was a question of party politics, whatever was decided had nothing to do with him. He only participated in voting on trade-union questions. (See Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 63–4).

93 The revised theses are printed in *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 113–26 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 190–200].

94 For this development, see *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 101–3 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 179–80].

which the majority had rejected. There was a further clash with Pestaña over the composition of the commissions. He wanted the delegations of the individual countries to decide who should be members of them. But the Bureau of the congress won the day over this, retaining the final right to decide on the concrete composition of each commission. The delegates would only be entitled to make proposals. For Pestaña this was a further sign of a 'culture of organisation' which was alien to (Spanish) syndicalism.⁹⁵ It would not be a mistake to assume that he was implying here that the congress decision gave the Bureau opportunities for manipulation. It turned out in fact that the prominent syndicalists, who had already announced their clear opposition during the discussion of the first point on the agenda – this refers to Pestaña and Tanner (Souchy had only a consultative voice) – could be found on the trade-union commission but nowhere else.⁹⁶

Before the congress was able to turn to the trade-union question, it dealt with the 'National and Colonial Questions', the 'Conditions of Admission to the Communist International' and 'Parliamentarism'. As in the case of the discussion over the role of the party, here also later decisions had already been anticipated.

The discussions in the plenary session over the conditions of admission revolved around the measures the Communist International wanted to take to prevent an influx of non-communists ('Centrists' and 'Social Pacifists'). The debates were conducted above all with the representatives of the French and Italian socialists and the USPD who were present at the congress.⁹⁷ They ended with the passing of the Twenty-One Conditions, which were directed to achieving the transformation of the formerly social-democratic parties which were now eager to join the Comintern, and in particular the removal of their 'opportunistic' spokesmen. Two of the conditions concerned communist work in the trade unions. They were taken over word for word from the draft theses, and there had been no further discussion of them in the plenary session. The ninth condition made it the duty of parties wishing to join the Comintern to work inside the existing trade unions and to organise 'cells' within them; the tenth condition prescribed a struggle against the 'Amsterdam "International" of the yellow trade unions' and support for the 'international association of red trade

95 Pestaña *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 55–7.

96 For lists of members of the commissions, see *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll 1921*, pp. 789–90 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 844–5].

97 The discussion is printed in *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll 1921*, pp. 234–401 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 308–419].

unions adhering to the Communist International which is being formed'.⁹⁸ None of the syndicalists asked to speak at these debates. The reason for this was certainly that, as Pestaña later commented, they regarded the whole thing as a matter for the representatives of the parties.

But the discussion on the participation of communists in elections again led to vehement exchanges between the syndicalists and the Bolsheviks.⁹⁹ Here it was the leader of the Scottish Shop Stewards, Willie Gallacher, and the German syndicalist Augustin Souchy, who objected in principle to participation. Another representative of the Shop Stewards' Movement, Murphy, contradicted them, but they could count on support from a number of 'ultra-left' communists (such as Bordiga and Wijnkoop), whose arguments were however less concerned with principles than with tactical considerations, in other words the pointlessness of parliamentary activities where there was a revolutionary situation.

Now, on 3 August, almost two weeks after the debates had begun in Moscow, the congress could start discussing the trade-union question.¹⁰⁰ Since it was set up on 24 July, the commission on this subject had needed six sittings, each lasting five hours,¹⁰¹ to examine the trade-union theses issued by the ECCI.¹⁰² Two different points of view had crystallised. They expressed different trade-

98 The draft of the conditions is printed in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 12, 1920, pp. 10–15, here p. 13. For the version passed at the congress see: *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 387–95, here pp. 391–2 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 765–71, here pp. 768–9]. One of the many inexactitudes, confusions and errors which crept into Pestaña's account of the congress (Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 61–2) is his assertion that it did not adopt twenty-one conditions of admission but a smaller number: 'With my hand on my heart I can say that the congress did not discuss them ... There was no reference in the plenary meetings of the congress to twenty-one conditions, as I can assert without fear of being wrong'. He first heard of them in Berlin, when he was on his way back home. His mistake was possibly a result of the difficult situation with translation services, which he himself refers to (Pestaña *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 59 and 61).

99 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 404–78 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 433–82].

100 For the discussion of 3 August, see *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 482–526 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 589–634].

101 Zinoviev mentioned this (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 520 and 522) [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 621 and 622]. He was himself a member of the commission. Lozovsky also complained that they had spent 'six days and six nights' discussing their 'differences with the British comrades', without any result (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 519) [English: Riddell 1991, p. 620].

102 These theses, apparently written by Radek, were published in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 12, 1920, pp. 19–26.

union experiences. One was advocated by people who were imbued with the traditions of prewar social democracy, and therefore stood for the strict subordination of the trade unions to the party. The other was articulated by the representatives of the syndicalist and 'industrialist' organisations. Here the English-speaking delegates came into more prominence, stressing the special characteristics of the nations they represented. In Rosmer's words, 'on one side were always to be found Tanner, Murphy, Ramsay¹⁰³ and John Reed, not in agreement on every point, but agreeing sufficiently to reject as inadequate texts which, essentially, did no more than take up ideas current in the Second International. On the other side stood Radek and the social democrats, confident that they possessed the truth'.¹⁰⁴

As a result of this, there were two reports from the commission. Radek spoke for the majority. He described the 'Communist International's relationship to the trade unions' as 'the most serious and important question facing our movement'.¹⁰⁵ He used membership figures to show the tremendous growth in the trade-union movement despite its counter-revolutionary leadership. Even if, in a given situation, the economic struggle turned into a political, revolutionary struggle, the trade unions would still not have lost their significance. Factory councils could not replace trade unions. But they were important points of support in the struggle against the trade-union bureaucracy and they should fight against the bureaucracy's endeavours to dominate them. The Comintern must also reject any attempt to set up revolutionary trade unions. We want to co-operate closely with the Syndicalists, he said. 'But at the same time we must point out to them all the unclarity of the road as they see it'.¹⁰⁶

From the majority's point of view, in Radek's words, what was of most importance was the relative weight to be attached to work in the AFL and in the IWW by the American communists. John Reed had proposed that they remain entirely outside the AFL. In the American situation, because of the reactionary character of the AFL, and the independent existence of the IWW, and the low level of organisation in general, it was permissible, said Radek, to create independent revolutionary trade unions. But the other English-language representatives were wrong to generalise from America. That was a particular case. Even there it was necessary to work within the AFL. The British representatives

103 Another delegate from the British Shop Stewards' Movement.

104 Rosmer 1971, p. 73. His remarks on the work of the commissions (Rosmer 1971, pp. 73–4) could also be applied to the plenary discussions. See also the impressions recorded by Pestaña (*Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 64–7).

105 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 482. [English: Riddell 1991, p. 590].

106 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 496. [English: Riddell 1991, p. 601].

had objected to the appeal of 15 July for the establishment of an International Trade Union Council because its political requirements – such as the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and affiliation to the Comintern – excluded the syndicalists. Their concrete proposals were not particularly far-reaching, but the result of implementing them would have been to shift the weighting of the Comintern towards syndicalist conceptions and they therefore met with fierce resistance from the Comintern leadership.

The report of the minority on the trade-union question was presented by Fraina.¹⁰⁷ He replied to Radek by saying that there were no differences of principle involved here. The only thing that was important to him was to gain recognition that in the USA, unlike in Europe, it was entirely possible to create new, revolutionary unions. He did not make any very concrete comments on the requirements for this, for instance whether it should apply to all branches of industry in the USA or only certain specific ones. Tanner also stressed their concurrence in matters of principle, though he went on to attack the majority's refusal to allow exceptions based on the concrete situation. The Shop Stewards had been unable to agree to the proclamation of 15 July founding the International Council of Trade Unions for this reason.

Further speakers, such as Walcher and Lozovsky, supported Radek's report, while the conception advanced by the Italian Bombacci, according to which trade unions were fundamentally counter-revolutionary, was not taken seriously even by the syndicalists.

The serious degree of disagreement that prevailed about the trade-union question was clearly indicated by Zinoviev when he announced on behalf of the congress presidium that there were sixteen more speakers on the list. He

107 See Draper 1957, pp. 255–8, on the speeches of Fraina and Reed at the congress. The minority resolution worked out by Fraina and Murphy, together with Fraina's contributions to the plenary discussions, was later printed in *The Communist* (no. 1, April 1921, pp. 5–8), the organ of the Communist Party of America, of which Fraina was a member, and which was one of the two communist parties in the USA until they amalgamated in May 1921. John Reed was a member of the other party. In fact Fraina had already moved a considerable distance away from the view he had upheld in Amsterdam in February, when he ruled out any work at all in trade unions which were reformist, and therefore in their very essence 'counter-revolutionary'. He emphasised this fundamental change in his opinions once more when he made a personal declaration to the Communist Party of America, written in February or March 1921, explaining in detail his attitude to the trade-union question and combining this with a sharp attack on the rival party supported by John Reed. In this declaration he unequivocally stressed that it was necessary to work within the AFL (Louis C. Fraina, 'The Congress, the C.P.A. and Unionism', *The Communist*, no. 1, April 1921, pp. 13–15).

added that the question had now been so thoroughly ventilated that the presidium was proposing to end the discussion there and then and proceed to a vote on whether Radek's theses should be accepted as a basis and submitted to the commission for it to work out a definitive version. Reed made a strong protest against this proposal. The differences of opinion had not been properly discussed. In the commission, Radek had evaded any discussion of controversial matters. The latter replied furiously, saying that Reed had acted 'shamelessly', whereas Fraina and Murphy had behaved in a calm and objective manner. The atmosphere now became heated. Gallacher and Tanner joined their voices to Reed's. Radek replied to them just as emphatically. When it was decided by 50 to 25 votes to break off the discussion and proceed to a vote on whether Radek's draft theses should be the basis of a definitive version by the commission, a scandalous scene erupted. Tanner and Reed declared in the name of their respective delegations that they would not participate in the voting. Pestaña also protested, pointing out that hardly any of the proceedings had been translated into French. It was in fact the case that owing to the rise in the number of English-speaking delegates, who continued to arrive after the beginning of the congress, as well as their very prominent part in the debate on parliamentarism, the original decision on the 'official languages' of the congress was changed, and French was replaced with English. This was a great disadvantage to Pestaña in particular, because his only language apart from Spanish was French.¹⁰⁸ With the support of the Dutchman Sneevliet (who was actually representing Indonesia at the congress), Zinoviev finally succeeded in calming the situation. He again pointed out that the discussion had not yet reached a definitive conclusion. It would be the commission that reached a conclusion. Radek's theses were thereupon made the basis for the commission's further deliberations, with 64 votes in favour and 13 abstentions.

The definitive version of the theses was agreed by the commission on 5 August. But the day before this, the agrarian question and the statutes of the international came up for discussion. The statutes now occasioned a further controversy about the trade-union question, because they laid down in article 14 that 'trade unions which adhere to the communist platform' should be associated together to form a 'trade union section' of the Comintern, and that the representation of the trade unions at congresses of the Comintern should

108 See *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 403–4 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 624]. Pestaña again complained bitterly about this in his report to the CNT: 'From this moment onwards ... there were whole sittings during which there was no translation at all into French' (Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, p. 61).

be decided by the relevant communist parties.¹⁰⁹ Reed protested that this anticipated the results of the discussion in the trade-union commission. He also pointed out that article 14 made the trade-union international a section of the Comintern, without much autonomy. But the original idea had been that the trade-union international would have a 'looser' relationship than this to the Comintern. 'According to the new statutes', he added, 'even the youth international' would have much greater autonomy than the trade union international'.¹¹⁰ Instead of this, Reed proposed, supported by Fraina on this question, that article 14 be removed from the statutes, but he was unable to overcome Zinoviev's opposition. All that was involved here, said Zinoviev, was a confirmation of the principle that the trade unions were part of the Comintern, just as they had been a part of the First International. Reed and Fraina would surely not want to object to that. In any case, he added, the really controversial questions, which concerned trade-union tactics, were not even mentioned in the statutes. After this, the statutes were adopted unanimously.

The next day, 5 August, the trade-union theses at last came up for discussion in the plenary assembly.¹¹¹ Radek reported to the plenum (for the majority) about numerous small alterations undertaken by the commission with general agreement, in which, for example, the particular importance of factory councils was emphasised and the role of the trade unions after the conquest of power was laid down.¹¹² But no final agreement had been arrived at with the Anglo-American opposition in the commission. Reed, as the reporter for the minority, proposed an amendment, based on the particular situation in the USA, which in the opinion of the majority would in practice have cancelled the communists' obligation to work in the reformist trade unions. Several speakers then inter-

109 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 571-606 [English: Riddell 1991, 671-99]. See also Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 67-8.

110 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 589 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 685].

111 For the report of the trade-union commission and the subsequent discussion, see *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 614-39 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 709-31].

112 As a matter of fact, the question of the role the trade unions might play in creating a socialist economy after the conquest of power did not give rise to any controversy, and was only mentioned in passing. This was a few months before the trade-union discussion within the Bolshevik Party which, among other things, officially drew a line under the unions' previous claim to exercise control over the economy. But at this time there was evidently still a considerable degree of consensus that the trade unions would need to exercise control functions in the economy, although if these questions had come up for discussion at the congress there would certainly have been far-reaching differences of opinion between the Bolsheviks and the syndicalists about the actual extent of that control.

vened on both sides of the argument, while Fraina endeavoured to show that the scope of the minority's amendment was limited to the particular situation in the United States. But Radek's theses were adopted by a large majority of the delegates.¹¹³

The 'Theses on the Trade Union Movement, the factory councils and the Communist International'¹¹⁴ were divided in three sections. The first section was a detailed description of the development of the trade unions since the rise of capitalism, followed by a severely critical account of the emergence of the trade-union bureaucracy and its drive towards class collaboration. Despite this, the mighty influx of members into the trade unions since the end of the war meant that it was obligatory for communists to be active within them and to reject any call for withdrawal. Where independent revolutionary trade unions existed, communists should support them, though at the same time criticising 'syndicalist prejudices'. The communist parties had without exception to strive to attain 'actual leadership' in the trade unions. The method of achieving this goal was to form communist cells within them. The second section dealt with the factory councils, their relationship to the trade-union organisations and their role in the struggle for workers' control. The third and final section concerned the international unification of the trade unions. In it, the re-established IFTU was pilloried as an instrument of the League of Nations and the trade unions were called upon to enter the Communist International.

There was no reference here to the proclamation of 15 July or to the International Trade Union Council set up at that time. After all, to a large extent the theses reproduced the original draft, which had been drawn up some time before the ITUC was established. Zinoviev had tried to persuade the trade-union commission to include an appropriate paragraph in the theses, but he failed owing to the resistance of some individuals and a shortage of time. After the vote on the theses he now proposed a special appeal, expressing the solidarity of the Comintern with the International Trade Union Council. Once again there was resistance from the English-language delegates, for whom Tanner spoke on this occasion, rejecting the Council's political basis. He also accused the majority of the congress of illogicality. They had, on the one hand, opposed the splitting of the trade unions within a national framework, but on the other hand, they now wanted to create an autonomous organisation within the inter-

113 Pestaña's laconic comment was: 'No quise ni votar. Para qué! [I didn't want to vote. What for?]' (*Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, p. 67).

114 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 526–37 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 625–34].

national framework.¹¹⁵ Zinoviev countered that they wanted to use all possible means to win the trade unions for the Comintern. This is why they wanted to remain in the national trade unions. On the international scale, however, the 'Moscow association' now existed. One could not stand aside from this.¹¹⁶ The proposal by Reed and Tanner to submit this question first to the commission for examination received only a few votes. Zinoviev's proposal of a manifesto to the trade unions of the whole world was accepted.¹¹⁷

The reasoning in this manifesto was to a large extent identical with that deployed in the statement of 1 August by the International Trade Union Council. The central point stressed in both cases was the behaviour of the trade-union leaders during the world war and their support for the League of Nations and re-establishment of the IFTU afterwards. The International Trade Union Council was set up to fight against these organisations. But since this manifesto was issued by the Comintern, the latter's role was now placed in the foreground. The International Trade Union Council, according to the manifesto, was fighting 'in alliance' with the Comintern; and the trade unions 'would become an indissoluble part of the Third International' through the 'mediation' of the International Trade Union Council. With this, the Comintern officially adopted the basis on which the International Trade Union Council had been founded some weeks earlier, but it also gave it to be understood that the latter was subordinate to it, in line with the Bolsheviks' own understanding of the relationship. When Zinoviev gave the concluding speech at the closing rally of the congress, he again emphasised the significance of the participation of the syndicalists and industrial unionists (described as 'industrialists'),¹¹⁸ and he expressed his

115 Tanner's speech does not seem to have been minuted. [Riddell 1991 includes brief minutes of this speech taken from the notes of congress secretaries]. The minutes only indicate that he spoke (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, p. 637 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 729]). Tanner's comments can however be reconstructed from Zinoviev's reply.

116 In a manner typical of his rhetoric, Zinoviev managed in a few short sentences abruptly to increase the number of supporters of the International Trade Union Council. He started his remarks by saying that the number was 'roughly eight million'. By the end it was already 'ten million' (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 637–8 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 729–31]).

117 'Die III. Internationale an die Gewerkschaftsverbände aller Länder', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, pp. 49–57. This appeal was written by Lozovsky (see Losowski, *Offener Brief*, Berlin 1920, p. 12).

118 'Representatives of the Shop Stewards of England and the factory committees of Austria and representatives of the IWW were among us. The main stream of the workers' movement flows in the channel of communism. We see a powerful river before us, but next to that there are smaller rivers and streams, which must all find their outlet in the great river

optimism for the future: 'I maintain that this too has a general historical significance. Capital's last support is the yellow Amsterdam workers' organisation. If we draw to our side the best part of the workers in this organisation, we shall have made sure that the Second International loses its hold over the masses, and that we can gather around us all the living forces of the working class'.¹¹⁹

The Bolsheviks had at least succeeded at this congress in gaining the Comintern's support for their conception of trade unions. The vast majority of parties represented there now accepted it. Since the congress had set in motion important steps towards the formation of mass communist parties, or towards the amalgamation of different groups where the movement was split, the International Trade Union Council now possessed sufficient organisational backing to allow it to go onto the offensive against the IFTU. The fact that the syndicalists had taken part in the congress, and had not broken with 'Moscow' despite the vast divergences demonstrated in the course of the debates, indicated that it might be possible to win many of the experienced fighters in their ranks for the Communist International. This inevitably led hopes to soar for a victorious advance of the world revolution. The end of 'Amsterdam' seemed to be drawing nearer.

3 The Organisation of the International Trade Union Council

Now that the foundations of the International Trade Union Council had been laid down and it had been approved by the Communist International, its conversion into a real organisation could begin. The literature on this subject has often relied on the account given by J.T. Murphy in autumn 1920 in an article about the Council entitled 'Two Months of Work'.¹²⁰ According to this, the Council was founded 'after the end' of the Comintern congress by the 'trade union delegates' who were present, hence by all delegates sent by trade-union

of the Communist International ... We are breaking with the detested traditions of the Second International, which mistreated the revolutionary-minded workers, who were the best fighters of the lot ... We are opening wide our doors to all honest proletarian revolutionary organisations, which are not yet communist today, but will be tomorrow. They are already prepared today to take up their rifles and fight together with us against world capital' (*Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll* 1921, pp. 693–4 [English: Riddell 1991, pp. 797–8]).

119 *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll*, 1921, p. 698 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 801].

120 J.T. Murphy, 'Zwei Monate der Arbeit', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 14, 1921, pp. 205–15. A similar account is given in his memoirs (Murphy 1941, p. 158). For an example of a later study which follows his account, see Kochanski, 1971, p. 133.

organisations or active in trade unions. He lists the following names: Tom-sky, Shablin, Pestaña, Milkić, Madsen, Taro Yoshihara,¹²¹ Columbino, Bianchi, D'Aragona, J.T. Murphy, Mikadze, Sneeveliet, Souchy (under the pseudonym Sturm)¹²² and Rosmer. These people, Murphy says, elected the provisional executive bureau, issued the manifesto of 1 August and adopted the statutes of the organisation. This version is not correct, however, for several reasons. The decision to issue the statutes and the manifesto had already been made before 7 August, which was the day when the Second Comintern Congress ended. Bianchi had already left Russia at the beginning of July, and D'Aragona and Columbino left at the end of July, after the uproar in the congress over D'Aragona's participation in the trade-union commission.¹²³ Hence all Murphy did here was list the names of the people who took part in the negotiations of July 1920, with the significant exception of Lozovsky, who was the key figure in the negotiations on the Russian side. (Admittedly, Lozovsky went abroad

121 Taro Yoshihara (also called Gentaro Yoshiwara) was described by the rww poet and activist Ralph Chaplin as the 'ever-present "office-boy" of Bill Haywood in the Wobblies' headquarters before 1917' (Chaplin 1972, p. 214). According to Chaplin, he lost his life in Russia at the beginning of the 1920s: 'That was the end of a pilgrimage which took in Italy, Germany, England, Scandinavia and Russia, the aim of which was to inform the world about the I.W.W.' (Chaplin 1972, p. 334). The representative of the USI, Borghi, recalled meeting him in Moscow. In an article in *Guerra di classe* (4 June 1921), reprinted in Antonioli (1990, pp. 305–9, here p. 307), he described Yoshihara as 'my Japanese friend ... the delegate of the American rww'. There are reports of his presence in Moscow by other contemporary travellers to Russia as well. Thomas Bell and Lewis Gannett met him through Bill Haywood (Bell 1941, pp. 233–4; Gannett 1921, pp. 11–12). Historians of the Japanese Communist Party say he was present as a delegate at the Baku Conference of Peoples of the East, at the Third Comintern Congress and at the founding congress of the RILU. The Far Eastern Bureau of the Communist International, in Shanghai, then gave him the task of setting up a Japanese communist party, partly in association with the RILU. We then lose track of him, except for various rumours. According to one story, a thief stole precious stones he was carrying with him to finance his revolutionary activities, and this led to his break with the communist movement. Another rumour, equally unverified, alleges that he was later linked with right-wing groups in Japan (Beckmann and Genji 1969, p. 39). Taro Yoshihara could not have been an official representative of the United States rww at the congress, because that organisation did not send any delegates. But it is probable that his presence in Moscow gave rise to the assertion made at the time and denied by the rww that there were such delegates. It was not possible to establish whether he had been in any way mandated by the rww to make his journeys around Europe.

122 A key to deciphering the pseudonyms also employed in the minutes of the Council is given in *Bericht des internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 36.

123 König 1967, pp. 91 and 95–6.

for three months in the middle of August). Murphy then simply 'transferred' to this list of people the concrete task of setting up the Council after the event. The reason why he did this is clear: the representatives of the Shop Stewards' Movement, together with some other syndicalists and industrial unionists (mainly from the IWW and the FAUD), had refused to sign the founding proclamation of 15 July, thereby withdrawing themselves, including Murphy, from further negotiations.¹²⁴ This way of presenting things allowed him in retrospect to reduce the break to a temporary difference of opinion. As we shall see later, at the end of August it proved possible to glue the movement back together again after a short negotiation.

The concrete circumstances in which the International Trade Union Council was organised can in fact be reconstructed with relative exactness from the available minutes,¹²⁵ supplemented in important respects by Pestaña's report to the CNT.

Shortly before the end of the Comintern congress, Lozovsky invited those signatories of the founding proclamation of 15 July who were still in Moscow to finish the task of organising the International Trade Union Council. On 6 August, Rosmer, Milkić, Shablin, Pestaña, Mikadze, Tomsy and Lozovsky met together. This meeting included representatives of all the organisations which had signed, with the exception of the Italians, who had already departed.

124 Pestaña (*Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 38–9) writes that in the second half of July, when the foundation proclamation, the statutes and the manifesto of 1 August were being worked out, the only organisations to participate were those which had already been accepted as firm members of the Comintern, in other words only the signatories of the proclamation of 15 July.

125 The minutes are preserved in the RILU archive. They belong among the most important sources for establishing the internal development of the organisation. In most cases it was simply decisions that were minuted (this applies particularly to the early years of the RILU). At most they contain some references to the reports made on the point of the agenda in question. In practice it is never possible to work out the nature of the discussion. Only when the RILU became more consolidated as an organisation, i.e. when the appropriate apparatus had been created, do we occasionally find agenda items minuted verbatim – clearly because of the importance of the subject under discussion – or at least the full text of the report on the item. It is not possible to say with certainty how completely the minutes of the International Trade Union Council or its Executive Bureau have been preserved. They are only numbered continuously from January 1921. Some of the numbers are written by hand, hence they were probably added later. The impression arises that by and large all the regular meetings were minuted. It can, however, be assumed that in this early period many decisions were made in an improvised way outside the context of the official meetings.

It therefore covered the whole of the group which was to form the International Trade Union Council.¹²⁶ Right at the beginning there was (according to Pestaña) a clash between Lozovsky and himself, when Lozovsky once again drew their attention to the resolutions of the Second Comintern Congress, in particular article 14 of the Statutes of the International, which described the trade unions as a section of the Comintern. The CNT did not accept all these provisions, which restricted the autonomy of the trade unions, said Pestaña. Lozovsky pointed out, however, that the Comintern had left the definitive decision to be made by a broad and really representative congress. All those present should work together to make such a congress possible. Everyone, including Pestaña, agreed to do this.

Lozovsky initially said that the Soviet representative on the International Trade Union Council would actually be Tomsy. The Central Committee of the RCP (b) had in fact already decided on 17 July, immediately after the founding proclamation had been signed, that the Russian trade unions should delegate Tomsy as their representative (with Tsyperovich as his replacement, although he played practically no part subsequently).¹²⁷ It is true that Lozovsky had conducted the negotiations, because of his knowledge of the international scene and his language skills, but the Bolshevik leadership did not want to hand over to him the job of actually heading the organisation. It is hard to be sure whether this attitude was based on political mistrust, since it was only just over six months since he had rejoined the Bolshevik Party, or expressed the feeling that he was not fully qualified for a leadership position at this level, since, unlike Tomsy, he did not belong to the inner circle of Bolshevism. Perhaps both lines of reasoning were simultaneously at work. If we go by the rumours that were circulating at the time, it was his anti-Bolshevik past which prevented them from entrusting him with this important job of leading the new trade-union international. In any case, that was what Cachin recorded in his diary on 30 July, without naming his informant.¹²⁸ As we shall see later, Lozovsky's role in the leadership of the trade-union international would be an issue for the Bolsheviks until at least 1922. Despite Tomsy's lack of international experience, he made a more positive impression on Pestaña, for example, than Lozovsky.

126 The minutes of this meeting are in RGASPI 534/3/2/1. It is also described by Pestaña (*Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 69–71).

127 RGASPI 17/2/32/2.

128 Cachin himself was not well informed about Lozovsky's past: 'The Russians had such an exclusive attitude, even with regard to the trade unions, that they wanted to take away the secretariat of the new trade union international from Lozovsky, because he was not a Bolshevik, but had been a Maximalist until very recently' (Cachin 1993, p. 620).

'From the very first moment, Tomskey turned out to be much easier to get on with than Luzovsky [sic!]', he commented.¹²⁹ One reason for this was perhaps that the sharp disagreements which had necessarily accompanied the composition of the founding proclamation now lay in the past. Perhaps Tomskey felt more secure than the 'neophyte' Lozovsky, who constantly had to demonstrate his loyalty to the party he had rejoined. Whatever the reason, he was to prove more conciliatory on matters which were particularly important to the syndicalists.

One example of this was the question of the meeting place of the forthcoming conference. According to Pestaña's account, Tomskey proposed Moscow, while he proposed instead somewhere in Italy or Sweden. Tomskey declared his readiness to establish whether it would be possible to hold the meeting in either of those countries. Admittedly, one can perceive from the way the resolution on this question is formulated in the minutes that the search for another conference venue was not greeted with great enthusiasm by the Bolsheviks: 'The Council considers it appropriate to decide whether to hold the conference in Russia just before the conference is convoked, depending on the information that has been received'. There is no trace of any search for an alternative in the RILU archives, although the question was repeatedly raised during the preparations for the founding congress of the RILU.

The VTsSPS was currently preparing to send representatives abroad. Delegations were about to go to Germany and the Balkans, and Shliapnikov was planning to travel to the IMF congress. In order to raise the international profile of the ITUC and to win supporters for it, these representatives were authorised to speak in its name as well, and to encourage the trade-union movements of Europe to send delegates to the forthcoming congress. The publications (pamphlets and leaflets) they were planning to produce would be issued in the name of the ITUC.

The organising group then went on to discuss details of the ITUC's future activity. It was decided that its manifestos and declarations would be signed by all members who happened to be in Russia at the time. This decision soon

129 Pestaña *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 71–2. There was on the other hand clearly a certain degree of rivalry between Tomskey and Lozovsky. As Murphy remarks: 'I soon discovered there was considerable rivalry between Tomskey and Lozovsky. Tomskey regarded Lozovsky as a newcomer who was trying to appear more Bolshevik than the Bolsheviks in order to supersede Tomskey himself in the leadership of the Russian trade unions ... But I was too preoccupied with my own work to give much attention to these differences, though I much preferred Tomskey as a man' (Murphy 1941, p. 161).

turned out to have important consequences. The group also decided to house the ITUC headquarters provisionally in the VTsSPS building. The VTsSPS would also be expected to provide initial financial support.

At the next session, on 11 August, the ITUC's Bureau was elected.¹³⁰ It consisted of Tomsky, Rosmer and a representative of the Comintern, to be named later. Tomsky was elected General Secretary. As we shall see, the composition of this body was to vary considerably. Perhaps the most important result of the 11 August session was the decision, in line with the mandate already given to the ITUC by its own statutes, to try to heal the breach with those syndicalists and industrial unionists who had withdrawn from the ITUC. It was agreed that an invitation to the congress should be extended not only to trade unions that had explicitly given their support to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but also to those that were committed to the revolutionary class struggle, even if they did not support the dictatorship. Tomsky and Pestaña were asked to approach the delegates who still remained in Russia on this basis.

Finally, an ambitious plan of action was adopted, laying down a number of measures to be taken to canvass support outside Russia for sending delegates to the planned congress. Rosmer was to compose an appeal to the French workers, Pestaña to the workers of the Iberian peninsula and Latin America.¹³¹ It was also agreed to publish pamphlets, and a bulletin in four languages.

The conversations which followed the decision of 11 August had a successful outcome. In the middle of July, the VTsSPS had still considered it impossible to reach a compromise with the syndicalists; but it was now achieved within a few days with comparatively few upheavals. It was almost inevitable, however, that the ITUC would have to change its character, because the influx from the Amsterdam camp remained restricted to the unions where the communist parties were influential. As a result, the Red International of Labour Unions was constituted as an alliance with the syndicalists. The foreground would now be occupied by the attempts to reach a compromise with them. On 20 August, the Executive Bureau of the ITUC was able to bring together a wider spectrum of activists.¹³² The additional participants were Souchy, Taro Yoshihara, John

130 The minutes are preserved in RGASPI 534/3/2/2. There is a sketch of the meeting in Pestaña *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922a, p. 72.

131 Pestaña (*Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, p. 76) remarked sarcastically that an appeal to foreign workers was 'one of those things they are so prodigal with in Russia'.

132 The minutes are preserved in RGASPI 534/3/3/3. There are extra details in Pestaña *Memo-ria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 73–6.

Reed, Murphy and Shablin, though Shablin's previous absence could hardly have been for political reasons.¹³³ Armando Borghi of the USI was also present as a guest. He had arrived in Russia in the meantime, and immediately had discussions with a large number of people, including Zinoviev, Rosmer, Kropotkin, Shapiro and Lenin. He also naturally talked to members of the ITUC and the ECCI.¹³⁴

His presence now led to a complicated situation. The USI's rival, the CGL, was a founder member of the ITUC. It was therefore entitled to represent Italy, as there was no indication in the ITUC's statutes that a single country could be represented by more than one national trade-union centre. On the other hand, it was clear from all the discussions held with the CGL leadership in Moscow that the latter could hardly be described as revolutionary. Nevertheless, it was hoped in Moscow, and this hope had been expressed at the Second Comintern Congress, that the next congress of the CGL would elect a new leadership. The USI had also been accepted as a member of the Comintern, and it had therefore been invited to the congress, though the Italian socialists were not at all pleased about this. The fact that its representative, Borghi, had only just arrived in Russia, after the end of the congress and also after the establishment of the ITUC, was not his fault. It was the result of the belatedness of the invitation and the difficulties of the journey.

Borghi now attended a meeting of the ITUC, and claimed that he, not the CGL, should represent Italy on it.¹³⁵ He gave two reasons: the CGL leadership

133 In his report on the origins of the ITUC (see above, note 1), Murphy wrote that he was immediately elected to the Bureau when it was formed. This is not correct, however, because his participation did not begin until the middle of August, and resulted from the successful compromise arrived at with the syndicalists.

134 Borghi started off from Italy too late to attend the Second Comintern Congress. He did not arrive in Russia until 14 August, when it had already finished. See the short chronological account of his stay in Russia, published in the USI organ *Guerra di classe* on 2 October 1920 and reprinted in Antonioli 1990, pp. 292–7.

135 See, apart from the minutes of the two sessions of the ITUC which dealt with the USI question (RGASPI 534/3/2/3 and 4), and the information in Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922a, pp. 73–6, the various accounts given by Borghi himself. His official report to the USI on his journey to Russia, published on 12 November 1921 in *Guerra di classe*, and his interview with an Italian journalist in Moscow at the end of August, published on 23 October 1920 in *Guerra di classe*, have both been reprinted in Antonioli 1990 (pp. 302–5 and 311–19). In his memoirs, written two decades later, this episode is only mentioned in passing, as he was very much concerned to downplay his readiness to co-operate with the Bolsheviks in 1920, since he claimed that he had already perceived the dictatorial nature of their rule over Russia (Borghi 1954, p. 242). In this work he does not even mention the

not only represented reformist principles but also the possibility of breaking with Amsterdam didn't even enter its collective head. Borghi's demand put Tomskey in great difficulty, particularly because rival blocs immediately began to form again on the issue, since he was supported by Souchy, Murphy and Yoshihara. Even though the chairman of the Russian trade unions did not have any concrete information about the intentions of the CGL, he would have to take action on the matter of its continued membership of the IFTU. After lengthy discussions, and a second sitting on 24 August which was exclusively devoted to this theme, they arrived at a compromise. The USI would also be accepted into the ITUC. The CGL would be warned that dual membership in both the ITUC and the IFTU was not possible. The CGL would have to hold a congress within two months at which it would confirm its exit from the IFTU and its entry into the ITUC. Tomskey successfully resisted a more far-reaching proposal by Pestaña that the ITUC should express its political solidarity with the USI. But at least the USI was now for the first time a full member of the ITUC (and two days later it became a member of the Comintern as well).¹³⁶

The sitting of 20 August also placed a restriction on the membership rights of the FAUD in the ITUC (or, to adopt the expression used by the syndicalists, the 'organisation committee for the calling of a congress of revolutionary trade unions'). It was expected that other organisations from Germany would also want to take part in the ITUC, so it was laid down that in that case they would be able to claim their own representation, independently of the FAUD.¹³⁷

These decisions were quick, but the writing of manifestos to the workers of various countries was a more long-winded and difficult process. Pestaña had been instructed to write a manifesto, and this instruction was repeated, but in his report to the CNT he only mentions the instruction, without explaining

entry of the USI into the Comintern in 1919. This makes it appear as if the reason for his journey to Russia in 1920 was a vague general sympathy for the revolution.

136 The acceptance of the USI into the Comintern was confirmed at a meeting of the ECCI on 25 August, taking into consideration the resolution passed by the Second Comintern Congress on its relationship with the syndicalists and Borghi's declaration that he accepted the resolutions of the congress. At the same time the Small [? Narrower was certainly not the word used in English. I assume it was Small, but I do not have Riddell's books on hand] Bureau of the ECCI was commissioned to write a letter to the USI on the duties arising from membership in the Comintern, and to push forward with the unification of the communist forces in Italy. Reed introduced an additional resolution by which the ECCI instructed the CGL to call a congress without delay (M.K., 'Der erste Monat der Arbeit', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, pp. 270–6, here pp. 273–4).

137 See chapter 3, section 6, for the specific occasion for this decision and the later discussion over whether the FAUD had or had not genuinely entered the ITUC.

why he did not carry it out before he left Russia.¹³⁸ For the British workers a draft manifesto already existed. But it was decided that it should be redrafted. Murphy was asked to supplement it with extra material. In this the ITUC stated its position on the current situation which had arisen through the formation of Councils of Action by the British workers' movement against intervention in the Polish-Soviet war.¹³⁹ The manifesto itself, on the other hand, was a general denunciation of the 'treachery' of the IFTU, which the ITUC had now been set up to confront. The ITUC was preparing an international congress, it added, and trade unions and Shop Stewards were invited to participate.¹⁴⁰

Since the final wording of both texts had only been worked out after the end of the sitting, it was decided to have them circulated to be signed by all members.¹⁴¹ This procedure caused a fresh conflict to break out with the 'obdurate' syndicalists Pestaña, Borghi and Souchy.¹⁴² According to their reports, Pestaña received a large number of copies of the manifesto to the English workers from a messenger sent by Tomsy. His signature was required. The package also contained an additional document from the ITUC, not discussed in advance, laying down rules for the 'organisation of propaganda'. It prescribed the establishment of a bureau in every country which would conduct propaganda for the ITUC by issuing newspapers, by campaigning in the trade unions, and so on. What gave rise to protests from the syndicalists was the provision that the bureaux would work in close collaboration with the communist party, and that although their members would be elected at conferences of revolutionary trade unions, the party had to give its consent to the choice. Pestaña initially signed this by mistake, because he thought it was another of the copies of the 'English' manifesto he needed to sign. Borghi and Souchy, however, had refused to sign, and when

138 Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 76–7.

139 On this movement, which had reached a climax with the boycott of British weapons deliveries to Poland, and almost brought the British trade unions to the point of calling a general strike, see Graubard 1956, pp. 83–114.

140 Both texts are printed in *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, pp. 119–24 and 128–32.

141 This method of work was frequently adopted later on, and the phrase 'flying vote' came into use to describe it.

142 This conflict is described, with some small variations, in Pestaña, *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922, pp. 77–81, and in another text by him, Pestaña, *Consideraciones*, Barcelona, 1922, pp. 27–8. Borghi also described it in his November 1921 report to the USI, printed in Antonioli, pp. 318–19, and in Borghi, p. 244. Souchy mentioned it at the FAUD conference held in March 1921 (*Der Syndikalist*, no. 11, 1921), and in his article 'Der Syndikalismus vor fünfzig Jahre', *Neues Beginnen*, no. 9, 1971, pp. 7–8. The document itself was then published in facsimile, with the striking out of Pestaña's signature clearly visible, in *Sempre! Almanacco No. 2 (1923) di 'Guerra di Classe'*, p. 136, and also in Borghi 1964, pp. 172–3.

they made him aware of this he immediately withdrew his signature. The messenger's argument that Rosmer had already signed the document did not make any difference.¹⁴³ All three syndicalists made a strong protest, which the messenger had to convey to Tomsy.

Interestingly enough, this document is missing from the RILU archive. According to the available minutes, it was not discussed at any meeting either of the ITUC or of its Bureau. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt the evidence given by the syndicalists. When it was published a year later, first in *Le Libertaire*, the most important paper of the French anarchist movement, and then in a number of other places, there was at first no denial on the part of Moscow. The subsequent practice of the bureaux that the ITUC and later the RILU established in numerous countries did in fact follow these guidelines. They always worked in the closest collaboration with the communist party in the relevant country. The Lenin *fond* of the former CPSU party archive also contains a document, probably dating from a year later, in which a similar decision on the subordination of the bureaux to the communist parties is quoted.¹⁴⁴

According to Pestaña's account, this incident caused Borghi and himself to hasten their departure from Russia. They both left at the end of August or the beginning of September. The rift between the Bolsheviks and the syndicalists, which had just been closed with such effort, was again wide open. Once the various delegates had returned to their home countries, an intense discussion

143 According to Borghi's later account, he approached Rosmer about the issue, and Rosmer replied that he was over-dramatising things. Borghi explained this attitude by saying that Rosmer was already with the Bolsheviks, heart and soul (1954, p. 244).

144 The document in question is an undated memorandum by the representative of the CPUSA, which was probably produced immediately after the formation of the RILU, hence in the second half of 1921. It quotes a resolution passed by a 'Commission on relations between the Comintern and the Profintern', which was to be forwarded to the ECCI for confirmation. The wording is as follows: 'A. The work of a bureau established in a country by the RILU should at no point come into conflict with the work of, or cut across the work of, the communist party of the country. B. The communist party of the country should receive adequate representation and full voting rights in all bureaux established by the RILU. Where differences of opinion arise between the party and the bureau, the position of the party should be decisive, with the possibility of an appeal to the ECCI. C. In all countries, the bureau of the RILU and the communist party recognised by the Comintern should work in close cooperation'. The author of this memorandum then added: 'It is to be borne in mind that this resolution prescribes a degree of cooperation between the two Internationals which cannot be laid down in published theses, but which must nevertheless be firmly established' (RGASPI 5/3/619/88–9).

began in their organisations on the attitude to be taken to the ITUC and on whether they should send delegates to the planned international congress.

The result of the syndicalists' departure was that the ITUC and its bureau had a smaller range to cover in their work. Cumbersome as it was, the organisation did now begin to establish itself. Now it was more than a mere organising committee for a congress at which all the important decisions would be taken, as had been suggested in some of the earlier discussions. The structure of a new international was being created, and the way it was conceived was now entirely determined by the Bolsheviks.

But what was now of key importance, in addition to the creation of an apparatus in Moscow, was the achievement of international influence. In other words, they had to win adherents in the international trade-union movement.

4 The Foreign Delegations of the VTsSPS in Autumn 1920: Making Propaganda for the International Trade Union Council

The ITUC project gained significant support from two delegations which the Russian trade unions now sent abroad. Formally speaking, these were bilateral contacts between the VTsSPS and its counterparts abroad, but in fact propaganda for the new trade-union international played the outstanding role. The ITUC had given the Russian trade unions a mandate to engage in this activity at its 6 August meeting.¹⁴⁵

The first VTsSPS delegation was established to make a return visit to Great Britain, in response to an invitation given by the 'British Labour Delegation' during its visit to Russia.¹⁴⁶ On 17 July, which was a month before the British delegation left Russia, a CC plenum resolved to form a delegation headed by Fedor Sergeev-Artem.¹⁴⁷ By the end of July, the VTsSPS had worked out its final composition. Its members were Lozovsky (who would of course have the greatest

145 RGASPI 534/3/2/1.

146 Some information about this delegation is available in Karpachev 1976, pp. 100–2, and Pankratov 1972, pp. 101–4. Resis (1963, pp. 76–85) gives a compilation of Lozovsky's longer speeches in Germany, without discussing the overall position of the delegation, which is taken from a later publication by Lozovsky (*Desiat' Let*, Moscow, 1930). This publication also provides information, but it is sometimes incorrect. The minutes of the Soviet delegation from its creation in Russia on 11 July until 7 September, in other words shortly before its three leading members left Norway for Germany, are in the RILU archive (RGASPI 534/3/6).

147 RGASPI 17/2/56/4.

public prominence, owing to his knowledge of languages and his international experience), Kiselev, Antoshkin, Lebedev and Naum Antselovich (all of whom occupied positions in the Russian trade-union movement). Technical personnel also travelled with them. The delegation was allotted £20,000, which was for the situation at the time an enormous sum of money. It would permit them to travel and publish extensively.

The state of communications between Russia and the West was anything but normal, as was shown by the fact that the delegation took the ocean route from Murmansk. On the eve of their departure from Moscow, they had a discussion with Lenin, who was still sceptical about their chances of getting to Britain.¹⁴⁸ They set off in the middle of August, and made their first landfall in Vardö, in the north of Norway. At the beginning of September, they reached Christiania. They wanted to go on to Britain, but it had already been decided in Russia that they should also visit France, Germany, Italy and the other Scandinavian countries.

In Christiania, however, the delegation learned that the British government had refused them entry.¹⁴⁹ They then endeavoured to travel on to Germany.¹⁵⁰ Lozovsky, Antselovich and Sergeev received permission to enter the country on condition that they spoke only to German trade unionists and only about trade-union matters. After they arrived in Germany, the other members of

148 See Antselovich 1957, p. 80; Lozovsky, 'Entretiens avec Lénine', Moscow, 1959, pp. 668–9; and V.I. Lenin, *Biograficheskaya Khronika*, vol. 9, pp. 165–6.

149 The TUC had tried to get permission for the delegation to enter the country. The Russians even agreed to refrain from engaging in political activity. But the government finally decided not to permit entry. The background to this decision was the campaign being waged against the Russo-Polish war. At its congress, held from 6–11 September 1920, the TUC protested against the government's refusal, which contrasted with the ease with which Russian Grand Princes, Princes and big landowners could enter the country. It voted in favour of a protest resolution introduced by Robert Williams. Only J. Havelock Wilson MP, the leader of the seamen's union, who stood on the extreme right of the British trade-union movement, opposed the resolution, with this justification: 'At the present moment the country is to some extent at war with the Soviet government'. His assertion was contradicted vigorously, even by moderate trade-union leaders. (*Report of Proceedings of the 52nd Annual Trades Union Congress 1920*, pp. 237–9, 288–93).

150 On this, see the detailed account given by foreign minister Simons in the *Reichstag* on 20 October 1920 (*Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, vol. 345, pp. 758–63). The vicissitudes of the delegation in Germany were thoroughly reported in issues of the KPD's organ *Die Rote Fahne* published during the months of September and October 1920. The delegation's stay is also mentioned in the section on international activities included in the annual report of the VTsSPS, although in general and without any details (*Otchet Vserossiiskogo Tsental'nogo Soveta Professional'nykh Soiuзов za 1921–1922 god*, Petrograd, 1922, pp. 1–2).

the delegation (including the 11 technical personnel) applied for entry. They arrived in Hamburg before they had received an entry visa. In spite of the KPD's protests,¹⁵¹ only four of them were allowed into the country (Lebedev, Kiselev, Lavrentev and Antoshkin). The rest travelled on to Czechoslovakia and Austria or returned directly to Russia.¹⁵² The action of the federal executive of the ADGB in taking up the cause of the Russian delegation with the German foreign office had been helpful. This was a result of an approach to the ADGB by the Berlin trade-union commission, which had been asked by the Russian delegation to intervene when it was still in Norway.¹⁵³ The action by the ADGB was perhaps the reason why the most important members of the delegation (Lozovsky, Antselovich and Sergeev) were invited to an exchange of information with the German foreign minister, Simons, after they arrived in Berlin.¹⁵⁴

In the next few weeks, the delegation engaged in an extensive propaganda effort. Lozovsky had already written a pamphlet during the journey, which was an account of the foundation of the ITUC accompanied by a fierce critique of the IFTU. It contained the first documents issued by the ITUC, and its subtitle, 'Moscow against Amsterdam', soon became a household phrase in the international trade-union movement.¹⁵⁵ The pamphlet first appeared in German, and was then translated into many other languages. Three other members of the delegation wrote pamphlets presenting information about their respective trade unions, namely those of the office workers, the mineworkers and the textile workers.¹⁵⁶

Immediately after their arrival in Berlin, the members of the delegation made numerous contacts in the trade-union sphere. They were interested above all in getting in touch with people who stood close to them politically, as Lozovsky freely admitted in his later meeting with the ADGB executive.¹⁵⁷

151 See 'Für die russische Gewerkschaftsdelegation', *Die Rote Fahne*, 17 September 1920.

152 This journey to Czechoslovakia and then on to Austria is mentioned briefly, but without any indication of their activities, in *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, p. 29.

153 The ADGB revealed this in a very polemical pamphlet it issued against the Soviet system (*Die Sowjetaktion gegen die Gewerkschaften*, Berlin, 1920, p. 10).

154 See 'Ein Polizei-Überfall', *Die Rote Fahne*, 9 October 1920; Lozovsky, 'Entretiens avec Lénine', Moscow, 1959, p. 669.

155 See Losowski, *Der Internationale Rat*. The pamphlet was written in August, but its preface is dated 'Berlin, 18 October'.

156 See D. Antoshkin 1920; A. Kissileff 1920; and N. Lebedew 1920. Only Lebedev's pamphlet contains an explicit reference to the trade-union delegation.

157 See the minutes of the meeting of the Russian delegation with the ADGB executive printed on p. 26 of the ADGB's pamphlet, *Die Sowjetaktion gegen die Gewerkschaften* 1920, pp. 26–39.

These political friends were from the KPD, which had only a slight influence in the trade unions at this time, and the much more influential left wing of the USPD.¹⁵⁸ There was intensive contact with the Berlin Trade Union Commission, which was the only branch of the ADGB to send a delegation to Russia at this time (see chapter 3, section 5). On 27 September, Lebedev had a meeting with the executive, and the Berlin officials, of the German Textile Workers' Union, which was in the hands of the USPD, at which he delivered a lecture on the Russian textile workers.¹⁵⁹ On 9 October, another member of the delegation, Lavrentev, addressed the Workers' and Employees' Council at the Krupp factory.¹⁶⁰

To turn now to the ADGB leadership, the Russian delegation waited fourteen days after its arrival in Berlin before approaching them with a request for a meeting. This happened almost at the same time as the IFTU Bureau gave its reaction to the 1 August manifesto of the ITUC. The Russian delegation's meeting with the ADGB executive took place on 2 October.¹⁶¹ What the Russian trade unionists expected from this meeting is shown by their proposed agenda, in which economic co-operation between Russia and Germany, the emigration of German workers to Russia and the boycott of the Entente's weapons deliveries to Poland took priority over the reciprocal exchange of information about the trade-union movement in each country.

First of all, the Russians were obliged to listen to the reproaches uttered by the ADGB leadership about their factional behaviour, reproaches which were not without undertones of didacticism. The discussion that followed, however, was exclusively about economic questions and the emigration of German workers. The ADGB executive had made efforts to secure the delivery of German locomotives to Russia, in response to a Russian request, although this was somewhat at variance with the activities of the Russian representative Lomonosov, who preferred to make direct contact with the captains of industry.¹⁶² Questions of international trade unionism were not discussed.

158 On the role of the USPD in the German trade unions, and also on the disagreements about trade-union questions which were beginning to surface within the USPD, and increased in intensity with the approach of the negotiations KPD over unification, see Högl 1982.

159 See note 12, above.

160 See Lawrentjew, 'Die Betriebsräte in Russland', in *Kommunistische Räte-Korrespondenz*, no. 17, 1920.

161 See note 9, above, for the minutes of this meeting.

162 On the question of locomotives for Russia, see Pogge von Strandmann 1976, pp. 284–9. For documents on this, see *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen von den Verhandlungen in Brest-Litowsk bis zum Abschluss des Rapallovertrages*, vol. 2, Berlin, 1971, pp. 225–8 and

A further meeting was arranged, and also a special commission to examine Russo-German economic co-operation was proposed, but neither of these things happened because the Russian trade unionists had to leave Germany in mid-October. The ADGB executive then published the minutes of this meeting, supplemented with further material on communist policy towards the trade unions, in order to document that while it had not failed in its duty of solidarity, which was proved by its intervention with the foreign office in favour of allowing the Russian delegation to enter Germany, the Russians had certainly failed to reciprocate.

The main activity of the members of the Russian delegation, Lozovsky above all, was to make public speeches at dozens of large and small meetings over the whole of the country,¹⁶³ at which they made all-embracing criticisms of 'Amsterdam' and explained to their audiences why it was necessary to join the ITUC. Some of these appearances gained particular publicity and sparked off fierce polemics, with the result that the speeches were then published as pamphlets.

On 17 September, Lozovsky spoke in Berlin on the history and role of the Russian trade unions, which had now, he said, taken the initiative by founding

262–4. After the VTsSPS delegation returned to Russia, Lozovsky and Sergeev-Artem informed the Central Committee and the VTsSPS Presidium in a letter of 5 November about the ADGB's wish to become involved in Russo-German economic relations. They proposed to involve all foreign trade unions in economic contacts via the Soviet trade missions in each country (GARF 545/13a/2/1–2.) This proposal doubtless had some merits, even if the economic power of the foreign trade-union associations was not as great as that of the big firms. But in the eyes of the Bolshevik leaders, there were certainly political obstacles to such a level of co-operation with the 'Amsterdam' organisations, and that was why no attempt was made to put the proposal into effect (with very few exceptions). It was not by chance that speakers at the Unification Congress between the KPD and the USPD mounted fierce attacks on the attitude of the ADGB in this affair. (See *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Vereinigungsparteitages* 1921, pp. 190 and 261). And when the first Henschel locomotives arising out of this business arrangement arrived in Russia, the KPD celebrated their arrival by reprinting articles from the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, since a capitalist paper of this kind was seen as giving a more objective judgement than most Social Democratic newspapers ('Bei den deutschen Lokomotiven in Sowjetrussland', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 1, 7 January 1922).

163 Cf. the list of meetings attended by members of the delegation, in the RILU archives. It is many pages long (RGASPI 534/3/6). On the activities of Lozovsky and the other members of the delegation in Germany, see the remarks in the biographical sketch of him composed by Arkady Maslow in 1941 (Lübbe 1990, pp. 408–9). There are some remarks about the delegates, in particular Lebedev, in the memoirs of Rosa Leviné-Meyer (1977, pp. 11–12). She met them through her interpreting activities.

‘a genuine international of trade unions’. This would have ‘an intimate connection with the centre of the international communist movement, the Third International’.¹⁶⁴ Some days later, on 24 September, in discussing the theme of ‘the conquest or the destruction of the trade unions’ at a meeting organised by the AAU, he had to change the emphasis of his remarks. He still made a strong attack on international trade-union reformism, but he called on the authority of the Comintern and the ITUC to back up his warning that revolutionaries who left the mass organisations were condemning themselves to isolation.¹⁶⁵

Lozovsky’s appearances at two congresses held in October received much greater publicity. First he spoke at a national congress of factory Councils (5–7 October 1920) organised jointly by the ADGB and the AfA on the subject of the role of the factory councils (or, in this case, ‘factory committees’) in the Russian Revolution. With its attacks on Amsterdam and its defence of the ITUC, the speech prompted angry replies from the Social Democratic trade-union leaders who were present. Lozovsky explained what ought to distinguish the new trade-union international from the IFTU. He told the congress that the IFTU’s member organisations during the world war had voluntarily subordinated themselves to nationalism and imperialism, they had abandoned any kind of solidarity and they had betrayed the struggle for socialism. Using lengthy quotations from the *Correspondenz-Blatt*, he reminded the delegates that the General Commission of the German trade unions had supported the Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty, which had been sharply attacked by the USPD at the time. ‘We had a deep feeling of pain and anger, and we were red in the face with embarrassment at the very idea that these sentences were written by our elder brothers – the German proletarians’. In principle, moreover, the attitude of the trade unions of the Entente countries to the Versailles Treaty had not differed from this.¹⁶⁶ These utterances by Lozovsky not only give one some idea of how

164 A. Losowsky, *Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung in Russland*, Leipzig, 1920, p. 15.

165 A. Losowsky, *Eroberung oder Zerstörung der Gewerkschaften*, Leipzig, 1920. It is strange that this publication contains no reference to the AAU, the body that organised the meeting. Compare, however, the report in *Die Rote Fahne*, ‘Die Versammlung in Kliems Festsälen’ (26 September 1920).

166 See *Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Ersten Reichskongresses der Betriebsräte Deutschlands. Abgehalten vom 5–7 Oktober 1920 zu Berlin*, Berlin, n.d., pp. 106–15 and 241–51. The quotation is on p. 113. See also on pp. 115–16 the reply by Aufhäuser of the AfA. The speeches were later issued as a pamphlet: *Aufgaben und Entwicklung der Betriebsräte in Russland. Zwei Reden d. Gen. Losowsky auf dem Betriebsräte-Kongress in Berlin*, Leipzig, 1920. There was an angry reply from the ADGB organ on the question of Brest-Litovsk in particular. According to this, Lozovsky had taken his quotations out of context, and in any case all

deep a chasm there was between the two wings of the working-class movement, but also show how great was the shock over the behaviour of the German working-class movement, the 'leading force of socialism', in August 1914. They provide a clear insight into the mentality of the communist trade unionists.

But it was Lozovsky's speech at the USPD party congress in Halle (12–17 October 1920) which set off the most enduring reactions. This was the congress at which the USPD split into two groups. The left wing merged with the KPD in December, thereby making it a mass party, to a large extent because of its influence in the trade unions. At Halle, even the incidental criticisms made of the IFTU by the Comintern representative who attended the congress, Zinoviev, were vehemently contradicted. The main motivation for this was that in the right wing of the USPD the tone was set by the party's trade-union leaders, who were resolute supporters of Amsterdam. The level of opposition increased when Lozovsky focused his intervention entirely on settling accounts with the IFTU and on this occasion placed the relationship of the IFTU with the International Labour Office in the forefront of his attack. There were emotional scenes and the session had to be interrupted temporarily. A series of personal declarations were made about whether or not Lozovsky had insulted the trade-union leaders. The Menshevik leader Martov, who was also at the congress, reminded Lozovsky of the way he had criticised the Bolshevik leaders in November 1917. The French socialist Longuet pointed to the internal contradiction in the position of the communists, in that they were opposed to breaking up the national trade-union organisations but wanted at the same time to split the international trade-union movement.¹⁶⁷

Lozovsky's speech at Halle also had unintended consequences. The Russian delegation had been under direct police surveillance for some time, and it had

these matters had already been decided by the international trade-union congresses in Berne and Amsterdam. The Russians, in contrast, had behaved with a complete lack of solidarity, in view of the support they had received from the ADGB in conducting their mission in Germany. (See 'Erklärung zu den Angriffen Losowskys auf dem ersten Betriebssrätetkongress', *Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 42, 16 October 1920, p. 56). On the attitude taken by the General Commission to the conclusion of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, see the critical analysis in Bieber 1981, vol. 1, pp. 492–7.

167 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages in Halle 1920*, pp. 150–1 and 219–37. After the split, the right-wing minority passed a 'Protest against Insults to the Trade Unions' (*Protokoll*, p. 263). See also the edited version of Lozovsky's speech, supplemented by a detailed commentary and ITUC documents (A. Losowsky, *Moskau oder Amsterdam?*, Leipzig, 1920), as well as the commentary issued by the ADGB ('Russische Gewerkschaftsbeschimpfungen', *Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 43, 23 October 1920, pp. 575–9).

been announced that their visas would not be extended. Now, however, the German government decided to deport Lozovsky from the country (together with Zinoviev), explicitly basing this on his speeches at the Halle congress. The other members of the delegation had evidently left Germany already.¹⁶⁸ But the Italian government also used the events in Halle as an excuse to deny entry to the Russians. (They had wanted to travel there next, so as to discuss with the CGL leadership its concrete relationship with the IFTU on the one hand and the ITUC on the other).¹⁶⁹ The KPD and the USPD made a joint attempt in the 20 October sitting of the *Reichstag* to get the deportation orders against Zinoviev and Lozovsky rescinded, but they failed,¹⁷⁰ so both of them left Germany by sea on 23 October, bound for Russia, not without having again rejected any criticism of their public appearances in an 'Open Letter to the German Workers' in which they also repeated their attack on the German and international trade-union leaders.¹⁷¹

Lozovsky was already able to give Lenin an initial report on the results of his travels on 28 October.¹⁷² He also gave a detailed account of his experiences at a discussion between the returned delegates and Moscow trade-union leaders

168 Cf. 'Ein Gewaltstreich gegen das deutsche Proletariat', *Die Rote Fahne*, 19 October 1920, and *Akten der Reichskanzlei*, 1972, p. 231.

169 Cf. Losowski, *Offener Brief*, Berlin, 1920, p. 3. Lozovsky had already tried to secure an entry visa for the whole delegation in September. But the Italian government did not issue one, in view of the general situation (the occupied districts of North Italy only began to be evacuated at the end of September). Lozovsky's 'Open Letter' of 1920 to the CGL contained sharp attacks on its leadership, which led to a fierce response from the latter. (See König 1967, p. 112 and the next chapter).

170 In formal, legal terms, the deportation was done by the Prussian state government, which was led by the Social Democrats, following a recommendation by the national government. At times the debates on this issue led to tumultuous scenes in the *Reichstag*, with interjections from the Right such as 'Hang them from the lamp-posts!' The speakers on the Right made openly anti-semitic remarks. Simons returned to the behaviour of Zinoviev and Lozovsky in a *Reichstag* speech on 21 January 1921. He was clearly still extremely upset. They had, he said, abused the rights of hospitality with their undisguised propaganda. In reply to this, one can of course ask whether he would have expected them to say anything different at the USPD party congress. (See *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, vol. 345, pp. 755–81, and vol. 346, pp. 1988–94, here p. 1991).

171 G. Sinowjew and A. Losowsky, *Wer beleidigt das deutsche Proletariat? Offener Brief an die deutschen Arbeiter*, Leipzig, 1920. Once he was back in Russia, Zinoviev also wrote a report on his journey to Germany and in particular on the Halle party congress (*Zwölf Tage in Deutschland*, Hamburg, 1921).

172 Cf. Lozovsky, 'Entretiens', Moscow, 1959, p. 669 and *V.I. Lenin. Biograficheskaja Khronika*, vol. 9, 1977, p. 420.

on 2 November 1920, on the eve of the fifth conference of Russian trade unions. International questions naturally occupied only a marginal place in the proceedings of the fifth conference, but it did approve the way the delegation had conducted itself.¹⁷³

There is no doubt that the VTsSPS delegation had caused a great stir with its activities, even if this had not led to any immediate results in the form of newly acquired member organisations of the ITUC.¹⁷⁴ Its freedom of movement remained restricted in Europe by the refusal of many countries to issue entry visas. It had at least been able to address the English workers and the congress of the French CGT (which took place in Orleans between 27 September and 2 October) in Open Letters sent from Germany, calling for solidarity with Soviet Russia, the revolutionary class struggle and the rooting out of agents of the bourgeoisie from the trade unions.¹⁷⁵ At least the open letter sent to the congress of the French trade unions had the intended effect (see the next section).

In addition to this, the delegation had conducted numerous discussions and established contacts, although these activities left behind only vague public traces, and as far as we can tell there is no archival evidence. Its members had spoken with the leaders of the Norwegian trade unions when it was still on the way to Germany. The Norwegians, like the Italians, were wavering between

173 There is some information about this meeting with Lozovsky in a note on p. 885 of *Desiatyi s"ezd RKP (b). Mart 1921 goda. Stenograficheski otchet*, Moscow, 1963, and on the reverse of the title page of the minutes of the fifth conference, *Piataia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов (2–7 noiabria 1920g). Stenograficheski otchet*, Moscow, 1921. In the minutes themselves the resolution is printed on pp. 172–3, but Lozovsky's report is not included. It can be found, together with an appendix by Sergeev-Artem, in RGASPI 95/1/17/1–44. The fifth Russian trade-union conference, held early in November 1920, was strongly affected by the 'trade union discussion' which was just starting in Bolshevik circles, in other words the dispute over the role the trade unions should take in the state apparatus and in economic life. See chapter 3, section 7, below, for the short discussion on international matters which took place at the fifth conference.

174 It is hard to understand how Resis (p. 76) comes to the conclusion that the fact that Lozovsky presented himself as a *representative of the Russian trade unions* proves how unpopular the ITUC was in the Western European trade-union movement. He was only able to act as a representative at all because of the invitation given to the VTsSPS by the TUC. This invitation provided the delegation with its legitimacy. In any case, the ITUC had sanctioned the sending of the delegation, and the delegation always behaved accordingly.

175 *Offener Brief an die Arbeiter Englands. Von der Russischen Gewerkschaftsdelegation*, Leipzig, 1920; *Offener Brief der Russischen Gewerkschaftsdelegation an die Gewerkschaften Frankreichs*, Leipzig, 1920.

Amsterdam and Moscow. Later on, these hesitations would be of concern to the RILU as well.¹⁷⁶ As noted above, some members of the delegation travelled on to Czechoslovakia and Austria. But the publications of the ITUC merely mention this fact, without adding further details.¹⁷⁷

The most important organisational result of the connections formed by the delegation did not become apparent until the beginning of January 1921. This was the setting up of an information bureau in Berlin (which was soon given the name 'Central European Bureau'). As a result of this, the ITUC now had direct representation in Europe. The Central European Bureau (MEB) initiated extensive propaganda activities in Germany and also paved the way for a multiplicity of links with the trade unions of Western Europe.¹⁷⁸

The argument within the Western European trade-union movement over the question of 'Amsterdam or Moscow' could now begin. The activities of the Russian delegation also had a side-effect: Lozovsky now became known on the wider international stage and had gained the reputation of being the most important spokesman for communism in the international trade-union movement.¹⁷⁹

Because the countries it was sent to were of less significance, the second delegation played only a subordinate role, even though it was possible to attach the organisations in question directly to the ITUC. This delegation was led by Nikolai Glebov-Avilov, and it travelled in October 1920 to the Balkan countries.¹⁸⁰ A conference of the General Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Bulgaria was taking place in Sofia at the time. Representatives of the Romanian and Greek trade unions were present, and it was agreed with them and the Bulgarians to hold a conference of trade unions of the Balkans and the Danube area in November. On 13 October, Glebov-Avilov then took part in a meeting of

¹⁷⁶ This point is mentioned in Losowski, *Offener Brief*, Berlin, 1920, p. 7.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. note 8; Sergeev-Artem gave some details in his report of 2 November (RGASPI 95/1/17/27–44). The visit to Czechoslovakia is not mentioned in the study by McDermott (1988), which is in other respects extremely detailed.

¹⁷⁸ See *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 29, and the comments of Rosmer in his report on his activities to the founding congress of the RILU (*Bulletin des I. Kongresses der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, no. 3, p. 15).

¹⁷⁹ It was ironic that rumours were circulating that he had been sent to Europe because he was opposed to the communist line on trade-union work at home. He was able to refute this emphatically on factual grounds (Losowski, *Offener Brief*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 11–12).

¹⁸⁰ Glebov-Avilov wrote a thorough report for the French-language journal of the ITUC: N. Glebov, 'La Conférence des Syndicats des Balkans et du Danube', *Mouvement ouvrier international*, no. 2, February 1921, pp. 38–43. Cf. also the short survey by L'vunin and Kuz'ko (1983, pp. 38–40).

the Yugoslav Trade Union Commission in Belgrade, at which its membership of the ITUC was confirmed. All these trade-union centres were closely linked with the communist parties which were then in the process of emerging, and they declared that they were oriented towards 'Moscow'. At that time, national centres with allegiance to Amsterdam only existed in rudimentary fashion, or would not be formed until a later period. Conflicts along political dividing lines often in fact went hand in hand with the results of alterations in state boundaries, as for example between the predominantly communist Serbs and the Croats, who had inherited the Austro-Hungarian tradition, and were more inclined towards social democracy. Here political differences were very probably bound up with national disputes.¹⁸¹

The Balkan-Danube Conference met in Sofia on 3 and 4 November 1920, chaired by Georgi Dimitrov. Apart from Glebov, who was wearing two hats, those of the VTsSPS and the ITUC, there were representatives from Yugoslavia, Romania and Bulgaria. The Greeks could not come because they were busy with elections, while the invitations to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Turkey had evidently not reached their destination. After a general analysis by Glebov of the state of the international trade-union movement, the conference expressed its solidarity with the ITUC and resolved to set up a Balkan-Danube trade-union secretariat. Each of the affiliated trade-union centres would be entitled to have one representative on the secretariat. This step was taken because the course of recent strikes in the Balkan and Danube countries had shown that in the absence of any kind of exchange of information between the different trade-union centres it was impossible to co-ordinate their activities, and this would inevitably lessen their chances of success.

A further point on the agenda, which already looks forward to the discussions at the first and second congresses of the RILU, and which originated from the need to discuss how the new secretariat would be related to the communist Balkan federation, was the relationship between the trade unions and the (communist) party. Since all the trade-union centres represented at the conference had grown out of a social-democratic movement which was committed to orthodox Marxism, there was no dispute about the principle that the two organisations should be closely connected. They decided not only that each organisation should have representatives in the other's leading bodies, but that they should also participate in each other's day-to-day activities. In addition,

181 Cf. the articles 'Bulgarian', 'Griechenland', 'Rumänien' and 'Südslawien' in Heyde (1931), vol. 1, pp. 280–3 and 732–7, and vol. 2, pp. 1360–2 and 1632–7, as well as Georgy Dimitroff, 'Die gewerkschaftliche Bewegung in Bulgarien', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, pp. 324–31.

and this was already unusual for a trade-union conference, they discussed the formation of communist fractions in the unions. While most of the representatives agreed with this, because they all belonged to, or sympathised with, the communist party of their country, the Bulgarians (represented by Dimitrov, who was later to mark himself out in the discussions in the RILU by the sharpness of his attacks on the syndicalists and their principle of the independence of the trade unions) regarded the provision as superfluous. The trade unions, said Dimitrov, were already communist and they would stick to whatever the party decided. But this point simply expressed the fact that the trade unions in Bulgaria were essentially parallel versions of the party instead of being genuine mass organisations. Lenin and the Bolsheviks had rejected such a situation in the earlier theoretical disputes within Russian social democracy, but it reflected Bulgarian realities after the split of social democracy there into a 'Narrow' and a 'Broad' faction, and it had already sparked off conflicts in the international secretariat of national centres before 1914. The trade unions of the other countries had to reckon with a membership that included many non-party people, while the Yugoslavs had to deal with a certain number of social democrats as well. Eventually, the principle of the formation of communist fractions within the unions was accepted unanimously; not the least of the reasons for this was that Glebov spoke emphatically in favour, explaining the Russian example in detail. The conference ended by sending a message of greeting to the ITUC and the fifth conference of Russian trade unions.¹⁸²

In addition to these two delegations, other Russian representatives had also been sent abroad, though these came from individual trade unions and were therefore bound for their respective International Trade Secretariats (see this chapter, section 9). Thus a challenge had been laid down to the IFTU. Its response was not long in arriving.

5 'Amsterdam' or 'Moscow': The Course of the Argument within the IFTU after the Foundation of the International Trade Union Council

When it met on 19 August, the IFTU Bureau called on its members to boycott weapons deliveries to Poland, and it also sent a copy of this proclamation to 'Comrade Chicherin', with an accompanying letter expressing the hope that

¹⁸² The documents accepted by this conference were published in *Die Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921, pp. 354–63.

'the principles underlying our appeal are the same as those that determine the foreign policy of the Russian people. The step we have taken proceeded from this conviction and was based on the hope that your government will unite its forces with ours in order to bring about a just and lasting proletarian peace'.¹⁸³

It was clearly only after this letter had been sent that the news of the ITUC's manifesto of 1 August to the international trade-union movement arrived at IFTU headquarters. This only made their answer more indignant. The text was agreed at a meeting of the IFTU Bureau held in Portsmouth on 6 September 1920, which was the opening day of the TUC congress. The declaration was apparently adopted without much discussion,¹⁸⁴ and it contained among other things the statement that the ITUC's proclamation was already an impertinence through the fact that it was issued in the name of the trade unions of Great Britain, France, Italy and Spain. (This comment itself made it clear that the authors of the declaration had not informed themselves very precisely about who actually issued the ITUC proclamation. They confused the CNT with the UGT, which was the Spanish member of the IFTU, and they were not aware of the fact that the Italian CGL had officially signed the ITUC's founding proclamation of 15 July). The anonymous authors of this 'very extraordinary manifesto', the IFTU Bureau went on to say, were 'either wilful liars or they are woefully ignorant', because, contrary to the assertion in the manifesto, the IFTU is independent of both the League of Nations and the International Labour Office. The IFTU had shown in practice that it was not a yellow organisation, as for example in its solidarity actions for Austria and Hungary, and in its boycott of Poland. 'It is always the IFTU which takes action, while its critics amuse themselves with manifestoes and revolutionary speeches'. Moscow was trying to divide the labour movement on political issues, but the IFTU would counter this by raising the cry: 'Proletarians of All Countries, Unite!'¹⁸⁵

It would soon become clear that the radicalism of this manifesto was purely verbal. That the IFTU Bureau was concerned to paint a favourable picture of its own relation to internationalism is shown by the fact that at this very meeting the Bureau gave its full support to the furious protest of the ADGB against the Belgian trade unions. After what had happened at the 1919 IFTU congress the ADGB, under Legien's leadership, characterised it as unacceptable

183 Printed in: *First Report on the Activities of the IFTU*, 1922, p. 19. See also pp. 47–51 on the international boycott action in the Polish-Soviet war.

184 This at least is the impression one gains from the published report: 'Report of the Bureau Meeting held at Portsmouth on September 6th, 1920', *International Trades Union Review*, no. 6, September 1920, pp. 1–3.

185 Printed in: *First Report on the Activities of the IFTU*, 1922, pp. 23–4.

for the planned congress of the IFTU to be held in Brussels. The IFTU accepted this view, and fixed instead on London as the venue for the congress.¹⁸⁶ The answer of the IFTU to the ITUC's proclamation of 1 August made it clear that it regarded the creation of that body as a declaration of war, and that it would adopt a correspondingly defensive stance. Nevertheless, the trade unionists assembled in Portsmouth were not yet clear about the extent of the challenge that faced them. No one had thought it necessary to find out exactly what kind of a presence the communists had in the Western European trade-union movement. They evidently thought it was too minute to be worth considering.

But two months later, at the extraordinary congress of the IFTU held between 22–27 November in London, they decided it was necessary to add an extra point to the agenda, 'Moscow's Attacks'. This unexpected congress originated out of a protest by three of the trade-union delegates at the Washington Labour Conference, which was initiated by Gino Baldesi, the representative of the CGL, against the attitude adopted by other delegates. They had abandoned the ground of the class struggle, as a CGL pamphlet later put it. Baldesi and his supporters demanded the calling of an extraordinary congress of the IFTU to clarify its attitude to the socialisation of the means of production and the currency question.¹⁸⁷

Despite its original intention of devoting its entire attention to questions of economic reconstruction, the IFTU was now compelled to engage in a controversy with its newly-minted competitor, not least because one of the signatories of the foundation proclamation of the ITUC, the Italian Baldesi, was himself

186 Cf. the report on the discussion referred to in note 184, and, on the reaction of the ADGB to the choice of Brussels at the meeting-place, see Ruck 1985, p. 208.

187 For this joint protest by Baldesi, for the CGL, Ilg, for the SGB and a Polish trade unionist, see: D'Aragona and Baldesi 1921, pp. 6 and 31. (This book is a collection of material on the international activities of the CGL intended for the delegates to the fifth CGL congress, which took place at the beginning of 1921). Baldesi's intervention at the Washington Labour Conference, and the positions he adopted, in which he remained in a hopeless minority, are documented in *International Labor Conference. First Annual Meeting, October 29, 1919–November 29, 1919*, Washington, 1920, pp. 122–3, 124–5, 134–5 and 265. Baldesi gave a detailed report on the Washington Labour Conference in the CGL newspaper *Battaglie sindacali*, which was also translated and published by *La Vie ouvrière* (in issues no. 30, 30 January 1920 to no. 33, 20 February 1920). His criticisms were approved by the leadership of the CGL and again raised at a meeting with Oudegeest, at which there was a sharp collision of opposing views. (Cf. Marchetti 1962, pp. 278 and 286–7). In public, the IFTU leadership played down these differences. They were only mentioned in passing, or ignored completely, in official publications (for example, its annual report of activities).

present at the November congress.¹⁸⁸ The Norwegians were there as well, and the Norwegian trade unions too were in direct contact with Moscow through their connections with the Norwegian Workers' Party, which was a member of the Comintern.

The mood among the delegates to the IFTU congress was not improved by the publication on the first day of a long manifesto, or 'open letter' from the Comintern and the ITUC attacking the congress. This appeared in the *Daily Herald*, the newspaper of the British workers' movement,¹⁸⁹ and it was signed by nine leaders of the Comintern (including Lenin, Zinoviev, Radek and Béla Kun) and by Rosmer, Tomsy, Lozovsky, Milkić and Shablin on behalf of the ITUC. It was a violent onslaught, full of insulting expressions, on 'Messieurs the Yellow Leaders', who were addressed as 'Citizens!' They had supported the imperialist war and were now 'the chief bulwark of capitalism, now living out its last days'. The Second International had already perished. The IFTU would also fail, because the International Trade Union Council had now been formed, under the leadership of the Comintern. 'Soon' the millions of members in the unions would join the Comintern in calling 'down with the yellow traitors'.

The Comintern's 'open letter' of November 1920 was nothing but a series of denunciations. It did not address any demands at all to the IFTU congress. Such a way of approaching the IFTU was only comprehensible to someone who was firmly convinced that it was already on the point of collapse. This thought would not have entered the head of a realistic observer. It is therefore not surprising that there had been differences of opinion between the author of the manifesto, Zinoviev, and Rosmer, who had proposed a different way of proceeding, directed more at convincing the millions of workers who were affiliated to the IFTU. Rosmer's proposal was an anticipation of what only a year later would be called the united front tactic.¹⁹⁰ In response to his criticisms, a second letter was issued, addressed this time to 'the workers of Great Britain' and describ-

188 The CGL was represented at the congress by D'Aragona, Baldesi, Altobelli, Buoizzi and Bruno. It had been unable to take part in the 1919 congress simply because it had not been granted permission to enter the Netherlands.

189 Rosmer makes reference to the publication of this manifesto in his extensive commentary on the course of the congress (1921, p. 5). The same issue of the journal in which this was published also includes a detailed summary of the discussions and resolutions passed at the congress: 'Conférence de la Fédération d'Amsterdam', *Mouvement ouvrier international*, no. 2, February 1921, pp. 80–7. The Comintern-ITUC manifesto was printed in *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 166–71, and in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, pp. 457–62 [in English in Degras 1956, pp. 204–5].

190 'Zinoviev and I had been charged with preparing, each of us separately, drafts on which a

ing them as ‘comrades’. The centrepiece of the letter was the argument that the IFTU was ineffective, faced as it was with the real power relations under capitalism and the actual policies pursued by ‘Legien, Jouhaux, Appleton and Gompers’ and the like.¹⁹¹

The new chair of the IFTU,¹⁹² J.H. Thomas, considered that he ought to comment immediately in his opening address on the attacks of the Comintern

definitive text would be based. But our two drafts were so unlike each other in form and content that there was no solution but to adopt one or the other as a whole. I had tried to set out the grievances of workers in an overall scheme that would could impress and convince them, by recalling the earlier activity of the Amsterdam leaders and emphasising that this Federation was hardly international – chauvinism was so rampant in it that the affiliated nations were still classified as allies or enemies as they had been in wartime. Zinoviev, however, merely let fly a broadside of insults, sometimes in very bad taste, against “Messieurs the yellow leaders” and so on. Only someone quite ignorant of the British labour movement and its workers could imagine for a moment that an appeal of this sort could win us supporters, or even sympathy, and make the job of the revolutionary minorities any easier. Zinoviev proposed that we combine the two texts together, but that was impossible. The appeal reproduced his draft in every particular, and I was very irritated that I had to put my signature to it’ (Rosmer 1971, p. 83). Later on, at the founding congress of the RILU, this point was picked up by Murphy when he made the following comment during the discussion of the ITUC’s report on its activities: ‘Personally I consider it necessary to remark that, in spite of all the good intentions of its authors, this appeal exerted a decisively negative impact upon the relationship the workers were beginning to make with the International Trade Union Council, and in fact strengthened the loyalty and devotion to the yellow International of many who were still vacillating’ (*Bulletin des 1. Kongresses der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, no. 1).

191 ‘An die Arbeiter Grossbritanniens’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921, pp. 345–54 [in English: Degras 1956, pp. 292–7, with some omissions].

192 Appleton, who was elected in 1919, had announced his resignation on 13 November 1920 in a letter to Fimmen. He gave as a reason, among other things, his view that the IFTU had now become a political and a socialist organisation. As a trade unionist he could not go along with this development, and he referred to correspondence he had had with the chair of the AFL, Gompers, who had expressed a similar criticism of the ‘revolutionary development’ that had taken hold of the IFTU. (Appleton’s letter is printed in *Erster Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1919–1921*, Amsterdam, 1922, pp. 10–11). There had in fact been some criticism of Appleton at the TUC congress in September. At the same time, the TUC had decided to cut out the GFTU and be the sole British representative on the IFTU. With his resignation Appleton forestalled the threat of being voted off the IFTU. The TUC appointed J.H. Thomas as the new British representative on the IFTU Bureau, and he accordingly took over Appleton’s position as chair of the IFTU as well. (See *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1919–1921*, p. 11). The way the GFTU was driven out of the IFTU is covered in detail by Weckerlein

and the ITUC. He said that he would not go into them in detail, because the congress should be considering problems 'which are actually of importance for the world'.¹⁹³ But in practice the congress found it necessary to add the 'Moscow Attacks' to its agenda as a separate point.

In his report on the first point on the agenda ('the world situation and the international trade union movement'), which he introduced with a rapid gallop through international developments since the end of the First World War, Fimmen was forced to state with regret, in his conclusion, that the Russian trade unions were not members of the IFTU. On the contrary, he said, all one heard from them was 'abuse and slanders, and a lot of nonsense'. The IFTU had shown that it really knew how to fight with its boycotts of Hungary and Poland. The main substance of his report was different from this, however: it was the fight against a new war and for a 'definitive and lasting peace', to be conducted by means of mass strikes and international boycotts, and the defence of the Eight Hour Day, in other words the implementation of the agreement achieved at the Washington Labour Conference. He had prepared appropriate resolutions on these points, he said. But the 'Russia question' surfaced again and again in the discussion. The ADGB delegate, Peter Grassmann, informed the congress about the statutes of the ITUC, which had become known to him just before he left for London. He proposed that the congress issue a special resolution, affirming its solidarity with the IFTU Bureau's declaration of 6 September.¹⁹⁴

D'Aragona was the first delegate to object to this idea. He was pleased, he said, that the IFTU now wanted to act politically, which was necessary in view of the international reaction. But it was necessary to look into the background of the ITUC's accusations. 'I am of the opinion that part of the responsibility does indeed lie with the trade union international represented at this meeting. I must regretfully reproach the individual national trade unions with declaring their solidarity at the decisive moment of the war with their own bourgeoisie and not with the proletariat of the enemy countries. By that action and those tactics the trade unions strengthened the reaction in their own country, they strengthened the bourgeoisie'. The CGL, at least in his opinion, had to its credit a series of successes in the struggle against the reaction. On the Russian question, he added that he himself had recently been the target

(1994, pp. 238–44) and by Prochaska (1982, pp. 150–64). These events formed the prelude to the establishment of the General Council of the TUC.

193 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 14.

194 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 24–6.

of abuse (a reference to Lozovsky's letter from Germany). Nevertheless, he was convinced of the historical significance of the Russian Revolution. 'I brought back from Russia a feeling of fervent solidarity with that fighting proletariat', he concluded.¹⁹⁵

The criticism of Fimmen by the Norwegian delegate Elias Volan was more pointed. Some people had too much trust in the League of Nations and its institutions, which had been able to achieve absolutely nothing, he said. 'In the name of the Norwegian delegation I must protest against the proposal to this congress of a resolution which takes up an active position against the organisation in Russia ... If we want to take an energetic position against the reaction, we must be friends and comrades of the organised workers in every country, and that includes Russia. Because the workers of Russia have made sacrifices as great as have the workers of other countries, if not greater'.¹⁹⁶

After this, Baldesi tried to introduce a counter-resolution against Fimmen's, but this was ruled out of order on procedural grounds.¹⁹⁷

Fimmen gave his reaction in a concluding speech, which was not without a certain schoolmasterly air.¹⁹⁸ He found his critics irritating. They were inconsistent. They operated in parliaments and therefore worked with their own bourgeoisie, so they were in no position to forbid the IFTU to work with the League of Nations and the International Labour Office. As far as the Russian question was concerned, he was not above offering a clumsy excuse: the reproaches about the organisation's attitude during the war were directed at the wrong target, he said. 'The IFTU was founded last year, in other words after the war'. Italians, Norwegians and 'the Russians, who are not present' (he evidently equated the three groups) had no valid reason to attack the IFTU as a group of 'yellow unionists' and 'social traitors'. Even so, he concluded his remarks with some phrases which everyone else certainly assumed were simply there to take the wind out of the sails of his left-wing critics, but which had real significance for him personally, as was shown a few years

195 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 30-1.

196 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 32-3.

197 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 33.

198 His comment on D'Aragon's reference to the CGL's successes was: 'Well and good, you have achieved great things, and I congratulate you!' (*Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 34).

afterwards: 'It is for the Russian comrades to offer us the hand of friendship, and when they have done that – and not before – we shall meet them half way'.¹⁹⁹

Out of the resolutions presented by Fimmen, only the one on the international situation was brought to a vote. The others were handed over to committees. The Italians, the Norwegians and the Canadian delegate (in his case for entirely different reasons) voted against the resolution on the international situation, while the representatives of the other 14 countries voted in favour. The result expressed in terms of membership figures was 21,906,000 against 2,710,000.²⁰⁰

After the congress had dealt with a number of other matters we shall ignore here, mainly concerning the economy (such as the currency problem, the supply of raw materials, and socialisation, in which context the Italians and Norwegians continued their opposition), it returned on its penultimate day to the 'Moscow attacks', which had been examined by a committee not originally envisaged but set up for the purpose on the proposal of Georges Dumoulin.²⁰¹ He also delivered the committee's report, something that Rosmer could only describe in his commentary in the organ of the ITUC as 'piquant', in view of Dumoulin's earlier attitude.²⁰²

Dumoulin's speech was devoted to justifying a long draft resolution which the committee had worked out in order to rebut the attacks contained in the Moscow manifesto to the international trade-union movement. Like Fimmen previously, he magnanimously shrugged off the past history of the IFTU: 'Dur-

199 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 33–5.

200 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 36. The Canadian delegate, taking up the same attitude as the absent Americans, declared that the congress was too political and too revolutionary. At this point, Thomas called out sarcastically: 'If he thinks this is a revolutionary congress, he would get the shock of his life if he were to visit other international meetings'. He must be aware 'that we represent an organisation so mild that its like would not be easy to find anywhere else' (*Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 32–3).

201 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 37.

202 Rosmer 1921, p. 7. He quoted a statement by Dumoulin as recently as June 1918, in which he sharply attacked Jouhaux, saying he, Gompers and Appleton were on the road to Damascus where they would meet the international bourgeoisie. Rosmer commented as follows: 'One now meets Dumoulin on the same road to Damascus. This renegade is really well qualified to avenge Moscow's insults against Amsterdam' (Rosmer 1921, p. 8).

ing the war we had different opinions on a number of matters. We are not going to reproach each other for this, but we want rather to stand together and work for the freedom and emancipation of the world'. Only one thing caused disagreement in this committee: a passage criticised by the German delegates, in which leading a trade union and participating in a government were declared to be mutually incompatible. It was originally meant as an argument against the Bolshevik claim to party leadership over the trade-union movement, but ultimately it could not be denied that it stemmed from the syndicalist tradition. The passage was unacceptable to the ADGB, in view of its many connections with Weimar governments, and it was struck out. The committee's draft also contained a clause which though expressed in the form of a general stipulation was nevertheless a sharp warning to the Italians and the Norwegians: the IFTU required its member organisations 'to refuse to follow any instructions by outside bodies calling on them to support separatist endeavours in the trade union international'.²⁰³

Right at the beginning of the discussion,²⁰⁴ D'Aragona made a declaration. The polemical fierceness of the Russian attacks could not be approved, he said, but they were a consequence of the situation created by the war. To accept the committee's resolution would be to retrospectively approve the behaviour of many trade-union leaders during the war. The CGL delegation would therefore abstain from voting.

A Belgian delegate responded by trying to pin him down to a particular view. They had only heard the day before in the committee that he had signed the 15 July proclamation. But he had added that he had noticed in Russia that people there were incompetent in trade-union matters. He should therefore draw a conclusion from this and vote in favour of the resolution. A representative from France then also joined the attack on D'Aragona, which gave the latter the opportunity to make a fresh speech in which he now explained his motives for signing the Moscow document in detail. (He had also given a written explanation to the CGL, but it was only handed in a few days before the congress met, so it could not be translated in time).²⁰⁵ During the war, the

203 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 58–60.

204 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 61–4.

205 It was not included in the minutes of the congress, but it is contained in D'Aragona and Baldesi 1921, pp. 31–41. This covers what D'Aragona said at the congress, including the CGL's criticism of the attitude of other trade unions at the Washington Conference, the need to place the trade unions on a class struggle footing, the CGL's willingness to join with the

national trade-union centres of France, Belgium and Germany had acted in solidarity with their own bourgeoisie rather than with the international proletariat, he said. The CGL had a perfect right to put forward its views in the IFTU, and to form an international committee along with the Russians, although they would have preferred it to be set up by an international congress rather than in advance of it. If it was thought that the CGL had made a mistake in its attitude towards the Russians, that should have been specified in the resolution. Apart from that, even though he personally had been unable to get to Zimmerwald, the CGL was the only national trade-union centre which had signed the declaration agreed there. A Dutch representative, Stenhuis, who disagreed with the CGL's attitude in other respects, did at least concede that the CGL had a right to 'build a cell' within the IFTU in order to give it a more radical direction. (Presumably he would not have used this expression later on, when it became a key concept in the communists' fight against the IFTU). The only outright rejection of the resolution came from Volan, who said that it placed the congress 'on the side of the counter-revolution' and 'not on the side of the hundreds of thousands of workers of all countries who see the Russian comrades as their exemplar'. All other delegates agreed to the resolution. The only exceptions were the Norwegians, who voted against, and the Italians, who abstained.²⁰⁶

With this resolution the IFTU had taken up Moscow's challenge and promised for its part to meet the offensive delineated in the Moscow document with one of its own.²⁰⁷ It is true that there had also been opposition to this line of approach. Norway did not possess a great deal of weight, but the Italians,

Russians in freeing the international trade-union movement from the opportunists, i.e. the people who had advocated participating in the war, and so on.

206 The resolution is printed in: *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 76–8. The passage on the necessary separation of trade unions from governments, originally criticised by the Germans, was reinstated in an appendix on the next day, with Norway voting against this, and Czechoslovakia and Britain abstaining (*Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 66).

207 What remained undiscussed, however, was a message of greetings to the congress from two Menshevik trade unionists in exile in Britain, in which they denounced the suppression of the trade unions by the Bolsheviks. It was read out, but without evoking any reaction from the delegates (*Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 38–9). For an earlier attempt by Menshevik trade unionists to inform the British trade-union movement, see 'Report of a meeting of London members of Parliamentary Committee and delegates from Russian trade unions, Monday, April 12th, 1920', *International Trades Union Review*, no. 5, June 1920, pp. 26–7.

who, unlike the Norwegians, had actually signed the foundation proclamation of the ITUC, were an important organisation. Endeavours were therefore made to build bridges with them. D'Aragona had himself admitted to having already received an 'abusive letter' from Moscow. Having read it, Fimmen remarked that he could not understand why D'Aragona did not respond by taking the same attitude as 'his friends from the other countries'.²⁰⁸ As Rosmer pointed out,²⁰⁹ Fimmen did not regard the opposition of the Italians as their final word. This was shown when he reminded them that the post of vice-president had been offered to them in 1919 at Amsterdam. They had been unable to accept it because they were absent from the 1919 congress, and they did not lay claim to it subsequently, but it was still open to them to take it up.²¹⁰

The main reason for the opposition of the Italian trade unionists at this congress was that they did not want simply to forget about the attitude of most trade-union leaders during the war. In taking this view they were following the Italian socialists, who had been the only mass party of the Second International to oppose the war on principle. But it remained unclear what that actually signified for the tasks of the postwar period, and what the difference was between the Italians and the other IFTU organisations. Although in his speeches to the congress D'Aragona expressed his willingness to co-operate with the Russians, it appeared that he expected the joint 'committee' (which is the way he described the International Trade Union Council) to work within the framework of the IFTU as a kind of left fraction. (It must have been clear to him after all the discussions in Moscow that this was certainly not the position of the Russians, since they had always spoken of the need to set up an *alternative* to Amsterdam). The clarification of the relationship between the CGL and the IFTU remained an issue still to be resolved after the London congress. The question was now directed back to the CGL itself, and it quickly became another theme around which its severe internal disputes raged.

Seen as a whole, this congress nevertheless marked the 'high-water mark' of the IFTU's influence, to use Lorwin's expression. It had 23 million members in

208 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 35. In the report of his committee (p. 58), Dumoulin mentioned that the Italians had complained there over the form of the statements made by Moscow.

209 Rosmer 1921, p. 8.

210 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 63. He added: 'If they had taken up this post, they would have found out that the IFTU is a very different organisation from what they imagine, and that the spirit and the activities of the IFTU gave them no occasion to take the field against it in the way they have done here'.

22 countries. A broad programme had been voted through successfully, for the disputes over the ITUC had only occupied a small part of the agenda.

Amsterdam (felt) that it was destined to play a leading role in the pacification and reconstruction of Europe. From this point of view the London congress established a general programme, which called for the cancellation of war debts, the stabilisation of the international exchanges, an international loan backed by the League of Nations for purposes of reconstruction, a limit on the issue of paper money, a wealth tax, international control and distribution of supplies of raw material under the supervision of the International Labour Office, the socialisation of land, mines and transport, the right of workers to take part in determining and supervising economic activities, the abolition of 'economic imperialism' and the removal of all customs barriers.²¹¹

These were very all-embracing formulations, but Fimmen had had to admit in his report that the situation of the trade-union movement was more difficult than could have been expected merely from the rapid rise in trade-union membership. The employers had attempted to take back what they had given up for a short while after the war, and they had been successful in this to a large extent. '[The] bourgeoisie ... has again gone onto the offensive against the workers, and in the sharpest possible way'.²¹² The congress had largely avoided answering the question of how far the programme agreed in London could be put into effect, and what instruments the international trade-union movement would need to use to do this. After all, one of the key points of the Italian and Norwegian criticisms was that the congress was cradling itself in illusions about the League of Nations and the International Labour Office.

In any case, it had been now confirmed, more strongly than the year before, that the IFTU had undertaken a change of course by explicitly recognising the need to venture into the political sphere.²¹³ After the experience of the war,

211 Lorwin 1930, pp. 80–1.

212 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, pp. 17–18.

213 Fimmen's words were: 'I believe that the war, and the two years which have passed since it ended, have taught us that the trade union movement if it actually wants to exist and properly fulfil its duty towards the working class, must see its task in much broader terms than it did before the war' (*Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 19). D'Aragona said: 'The Italian delegation takes note with great satisfaction of the fact that the international now sees it is necessary not to

no one disputed that the tasks of the trade unions were not limited purely to the economic struggle. But the commitment to a struggle against war and to actions of a political type, which was most persistently formulated and presented by Fimmen, was also an explicit commitment to reformism, and it stood in opposition to the Bolshevik model of revolution. The political confrontation between the representatives of the two strategies was therefore intense. The idea of finding common demands, which lay beneath the surface of divergent political objectives, was discussed from 1922–3 onwards under the heading of the ‘united front’. But in 1920 neither side even gave it consideration. The foreground was occupied exclusively by the drive to put as great a distance between each other as possible. Thus Moscow engaged in polemics against the ‘yellow international’,²¹⁴ that group of ‘demagogues’ who pompously presented themselves as an organisation of millions but forgot that many of their members were communists. At the London congress, they had simply claimed to represent them as well, as Lozovsky commented.²¹⁵ In a further article, he grasped the outstretched hand brought into the argument by Fimmen,²¹⁶ writing that:

The Russian revolutionaries have not rejected a hand stretched out to them, and they are ready to march together with those who are fighting on the front of social revolution. When they have rejected an outstretched hand, this was only in cases ... where they were offered the stones of reformism rather than the bread of socialism ... There can be no compromise, and no understanding, with those who seek the solution of the social question in a compromise with the bourgeoisie. The task of every revolutionary and every communist is a persistent and inexorable struggle to gain influence over the masses, and to conquer, revolutionise and utilise the trade unions as a means of struggle for the achievement of the social revolution.²¹⁷

limit itself to trade union actions but also to envisage many-sided and large-scale political action’ (*Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 30).

214 Cf. the title of Rosmer’s 1921 article, ‘L’Internationale jaune’.

215 In the article ‘Amsterdam v Londone. Mezhdunarodnyi s”ezd demagogov’ in the December issue of the VTsSPS newspaper *Vestnik truda*, reprinted in Lozovsky 1930, pp. 224–31.

216 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß 1920*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 35.

217 A. Losowsky, ‘Amsterdam, Moskau, London’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, pp. 298–324, here pp. 319–20.

The reaction from the other side was not very different. After the end of the London congress, on 10 December, Oudegeest wrote to Zinoviev in the name of the IFTU leadership, addressing him as 'Mr. President Zinoviev', since he was the head of the Comintern.²¹⁸ He informed him of the text of the resolution and declared that the IFTU would act in accordance with it. The IFTU would be guided by the interests of its members alone, and would therefore not subordinate itself to a political party, as was the case with the ITUC (this is evidently why he wrote directly to Zinoviev instead of to the ITUC). The IFTU was ready at any time to exchange information 'in good faith', if each side conceded to the other that 'they serve the interests of the proletariat'. In that case, 'it might also be possible to achieve the affiliation of the Russian trade unions to our organisation'.

Zinoviev's reply to the 'Gentlemen' of the IFTU, dated 29 January, was a renewed verbal attack, as was to be expected, couched entirely in the style so criticised by Rosmer.²¹⁹ The IFTU does not speak in the name of its millions of members but in that of 'a small handful of trade union bureaucrats'. It is people like Albert Thomas, Jouhaux, Legien, Henderson, Vandervelde, Ebert and Noske who set the tone. Since the workers see this ever more clearly, he added, they are deserting 'your tainted yellow camp' in droves and moving over to the camp of the red Moscow international, whose congress, soon to be held, will be a great success. But if Amsterdam wanted to exchange information, he proposed that big public discussion meetings be held in the major European capital cities from 1 February onwards. It would not be difficult for the IFTU to get the agreement of the European governments to that. Zinoviev closed his reply with an assurance of sympathy: 'We express our condolences on the fact that your ranks are melting away with such rapidity before the eyes of the whole world'.

This impertinent, and in fact politically senseless,²²⁰ reply stung the leaders of the IFTU to fury, although they were not over-sensitive people. Their fury

218 Printed in *Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, nos. 2/3, March/May 1921, pp. 17–18.

219 Printed in *Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, nos. 2/3, March/May 1921, pp. 18–20. The Amsterdam letter was discussed in the ECCI sitting held on 14 January 1921. The idea also emerged there of inviting the IFTU to hold joint discussions ('Aus den Protokollen des Exekutivkomitees', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921, pp. 425–40, here pp. 437–8. Zinoviev's letter is also printed in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921, pp. 441–5).

220 Another Comintern leader, Radek, was engaged at exactly this time, together with the leadership of the KPD, in taking the first step towards the united front policy, by preparing an 'Open Letter' to all German workers' organisations proposing a joint struggle for a minimum programme. (This point will be treated in more detail later).

was still in evidence a year later, when the report on the activities of the Bureau to the IFTU congress of April 1922 contained this passage: 'This gentleman [Zinoviev] replied by telegram in a style which we will not too closely describe, but which made it practically impossible to conduct any further correspondence with him. If it were merely a matter of personal feeling, we would have absolutely refused to conduct correspondence with anybody who is so totally ignorant of the ordinary conventionalities of social intercourse. But this was not how matters stood'.²²¹ But because it was feared that this 'concoction of vile falsehoods and perfidious insinuations' might mislead 'some of our comrades', they finally condescended, despite their disinclination to do so, to send a rejoinder, which was signed by the Bureau this time and went straight to the whole 'Council of People's Commissars'.²²²

This statement was very detailed. It expressed indignation that Zinoviev was trying to besmirch the memory of the dead – in this case Legien – and it then turned to examine whether Amsterdam was independent or subordinate to the League of Nations or individual governments. Many examples were given of repressive measures against member unions of the IFTU, in order to provide a powerful rebuttal of this allegation. One could of course have enumerated just as many counter-examples of co-operation with governments and of repeatedly expressed optimism about the effectiveness of the League of Nations and its Labour Office, which was headed by Thomas. The IFTU avoided giving a reply to Zinoviev's proposal of joint public discussion meetings by saying that the notice he had given was much too short. Moscow had also not yet made it clear that it was able to take part in discussions without uttering falsehoods and insults. Statements by Lenin about Zinoviev in October 1917, when he was opposed to the Bolshevik uprising, and old statements by Lozovsky against the Bolsheviks were cleverly combined with extracts from resolutions of a more recent date on the subordination of the trade unions to the party in order to show that in Russia the trade unions were not genuinely independent. The letter ended by stating that the IFTU continued to be in principle ready for reconciliation, but it restated the condition that each side must concede to the other that it was serving the interests of the proletariat.

It must have cost the IFTU leadership some effort to bring itself to reply, in view of the tone of Zinoviev's letter. On the other hand, the decision was made

221 *Erster Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1919–1921 1922*, p. 76 [English: *First Report on the Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions (July 1919–December 1921) (Supplement v of The International Trade Union Movement)*, Amsterdam 1922, pp. 74–5].

222 *Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, nos. 2–3, March–May 1921, pp. 20–2.

easier by the certainty that Moscow would not respond in any case. Developments after 1923 would show that where Moscow did respond differences of opinion were likely to emerge within the IFTU leadership. For the moment, however, the IFTU was absolutely sure of itself, and thus at its first session after the London congress (18–20 May 1921) the executive was able to approve the action of its Bureau. This approval was also combined with a plain warning to members of the IFTU not to enter into any kind of relationship with Moscow. Dual membership of the IFTU and the ITUC would not be permitted.²²³

The amount of determination with which the IFTU confronted Moscow would ultimately depend on the way its member organisations conducted themselves. The question of membership of one organisation or the other was now on the agenda at the forthcoming congresses of the trade unions. The real decisions would have to be made there.

In France, the big railway strikes of April and May 1920 had ended in defeat, which was also 'the defeat of the total revolution advocated by the syndicalists', as Kriegel heads the corresponding section of her book.²²⁴ The strikes had come about on the initiative of the revolutionary leadership of the railway workers' trade union, which was a stronghold of the CGT Minority. The wave of persecution which began after this defeat appeared to give the CGT leadership around Jouhaux a certain amount of breathing space, but it also caused the CGT Minority to devote itself with greater energy to confrontation.

There was already a clash of irreconcilable antagonisms at the 23–24 August meeting of the CGT's federal executive, the *Comité Confédéral National* (CCN).²²⁵ For the first time, the demand was made for affiliation to the Third International. The CGT Majority still seemed to be firmly in control, however. The call to join the Comintern was rejected by 94 votes to 18.

In the next few weeks, the rival tendencies started to campaign intensively.²²⁶ Both relied for support on the Charter of Amiens, the Majority because they wanted to use it to distance themselves from a party, the party of the Third International, the Minority because they relied on its references to revolutionary action. The Minority created its own channels of communication, and a meeting of its delegates was called on the eve of the CGT congress. But the view that eventually prevailed among the Minority was that it was better to organise within the union and fight to win a majority, so that it would be the reformists who had to split the CGT.

223 *Erster Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1919–1921* 1922, p. 76 [English: *First Report*, 1922, p. 75].

224 Kriegel 1964, vol. 1, pp. 355–547. Cf. also Labi 1964, pp. 140–58.

225 Labi 1964, pp. 169–70, and Georges, Tintant and Renault 1962, pp. 388–9.

226 The next section follows Labi 1964, pp. 170–4.

The CGT congress met from 27 September to 2 October in Orleans.²²⁷ The issue of principle was now raised, amidst reciprocal accusations, of whether to decide for Amsterdam or for Moscow (although the Minority made the demand to join Moscow out of a feeling of solidarity with the Russian Revolution rather than complete agreement with its political consequences, as would soon become clear). The Minority had been weakened since the earlier strikes by a number of arrests, not least that of Monatte. They were confronted by a coalition between Jouhaux and the former moderate Zimmerwaldians around Dumoulin and Merrheim, which had become more resolute in its opposition. The central theme of the speeches by Dumoulin and Jouhaux was their justification of the attitude taken by the CGT leadership since the last congress.²²⁸ Merrheim, on the other hand, examined more fundamental issues.²²⁹ He looked in detail at the views of Lenin, he recounted his experiences at Zimmerwald with him and he then quoted 'Russian material': evaluations of Lenin given by the French-Russian-Jewish socialist (and by then communist) Rappoport during the factional struggles within Russian Social Democracy, and the sharp attacks on him made by Lozovsky after the October Revolution. Moscow now wanted to place the international trade-union movement under party command, in the same spirit of factionalism previously attacked by Rappoport and Lozovsky. The speakers for the Minority, in contrast, denounced the Majority for 'betrayal', during the war, and during the strikes of the spring of 1920. For them, the only way out was that offered by the Third International.

Since the members of the Russian trade-union delegation had not received visas (in an adroit move, Jouhaux made a protest about this right at the beginning of the congress)²³⁰ a long address of greeting from them was read out, depicting the situation of Russia in the face of the aggression of the Entente and stressing the role the trade unions were playing as an independent force in the revolution. This second point was well tailored to the nature of the con-

227 See the minutes of the congress: *XIXe congrès national corporatif (xve de la C.G.T.). Tenu à Orléans du 27 septembre au 2 October 1920. Compte rendu des travaux 1920*, Paris. There is a summary of the proceedings in Labi 1964, pp. 174–81.

228 *XIXe congrès national corporatif 1920*, pp. 161–83 and 191–219.

229 *XIXe congrès national corporatif 1920*, pp. 360–93. Merrheim owed his knowledge of matters which would otherwise have hardly been known in the Western European workers' movement to the Franco-Russian socialist Max Hoschiller, who had belonged to the group around *La Vie ouvrière* before the war, and had also frequented Russian exile circles, after which he took roughly the same path as Merrheim. (Cf. Merrheim's preface to Max Hoschiller, *Le mirage du soviétisme*, Paris, 1921).

230 *XIXe congrès national corporatif 1920*, pp. 3–4.

gress. The address did not contain a call to affiliate to the Comintern or to the ITUC. This was certainly omitted on tactical grounds.²³¹ The representatives of the national trade-union centres, and the secretary of the IFTU, Oudegeest, who were present at the CGT congress, responded by vehemently defending themselves against Moscow's attacks on the 'yellow unions'. Unity was in danger, they said.

Two completely contrary perspectives thus confronted each other at this congress. The resolution submitted by the Minority stated: 'This congress declares that affiliation to the Moscow International, far from being a breach of the Charter of Amiens, is the clear duty of the CGT. The CGT must go to Moscow, just as it was its duty to go to Zimmerwald in 1915. There is only one revolutionary international, the Moscow one; the CGT, which has again become true to its revolutionary spirit, must join the Moscow International, and it declares its readiness to collaborate in deeds and not in words with the political organism which will act in a revolutionary fashion, though despite that it will completely retain its autonomy'.²³² The significance of the reservation in the final phrase would soon become clear.

Jouhaux, on the other hand, proposed the following formulation: 'The congress proclaims that the basis on which the CGT was established, the principle of autonomy it has so far upheld, its methods of action and realisation, remain in absolute harmony with the present requirements of the struggle'. His resolution went on to express 'complete confidence' in the IFTU.²³³

The results of the vote confirmed that the balance of forces remained the same as before. Jouhaux received 1,515 votes and the Minority 552 (there was in addition a small anarchist current, which received 44 votes). There was thus no increase in the strength of the Minority, but in view of the whole situation since the failure of the strikes, with the arrest of a number of important leaders, and so on, the Minority had maintained itself well, so that the conditions for rapid growth had been created, as would appear almost immediately.²³⁴

The Minority had already made a great step forward in their discussions before the congress, and they continued their advance after it.²³⁵ They did not just declare that they were joining the Third International. They also created a firm organisational structure by establishing *Comités Syndicalistes Révolution-*

231 *XIXe congrès national corporatif* 1920, pp. 237–42. Also printed as *Offener Brief der Russischen Gewerkschaftsdelegation an die Gewerkschaften Frankreichs*, Leipzig, 1920.

232 *XIXe congrès national corporatif* 1920, pp. 403–5, here pp. 405–6.

233 *XIXe congrès national corporatif* 1920, pp. 413–15.

234 Cf. also Labi's evaluation (1964, p. 181).

235 On what follows, cf. Labi 1964, pp. 172–3 and 182–3, and Batsch and Bouvet 1983, pp. 128–35.

naires (CSRs). The aim of these committees was to bind together the supporters of the Minority as individuals, so that they formed a movement within the trade unions, of a kind which had often existed before in the history of the CGT. Before 1914, this had cut both ways: the reformist opposition against the revolutionary-syndicalist leadership combined together as a movement, while, conversely, a committee of revolutionary syndicalists formed within the printworkers' trade union, which was led by reformists. This committee had received the support of Jouhaux.²³⁶ (In 1920–1, the CGT Majority also organised 'as a faction', although it preferred to proceed in a more informal way).²³⁷ The CSRs represented an innovation, to the extent that whole trade unions could affiliate to them. But this new approach, like their establishment of regional sections, exposed them to the accusation that they were preparing to set up a rival organisation to the CGT. In any case, that was the intention of a strong group of 'pure' syndicalists within the Minority, who had anarchist sympathies. They were pressing for a rapid split and they wanted to create the necessary structure for this.²³⁸ But Monatte, who warned against a split, was elected as General Secretary of the CSR movement, although owing to his arrest, the functions of the office were performed by someone else.²³⁹

The months that followed were characterised by two contrary developments. On the one hand, the CGT's National Federal Committee (CCN), meeting on 8–10 November, two weeks before the congress of the IFTU in London, now openly threatened the Minority with expulsion.²⁴⁰ A resolution introduced by Dumoulin asserted that 'the trade unions which have affiliated to the *Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires* have placed themselves in a position of hostility, moral division and disorganisation'. It would be an inevitable result, and the CGT leadership could no longer do anything about this, he added, that the

236 Charles 1976, p. 332.

237 Charles (1976, pp. 333–4) has brought together some material from police archives on this point, and he quotes complaints by representatives of the Minority at CGT meetings, which were not answered by the representatives of the Majority.

238 In the middle of 1920, Péricat had already attempted to establish a new, revolutionary trade-union centre, based on his influence in Marseilles in the local union of building workers. He called it the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Monde*. It failed completely, but one of the participants was the young Benoît Frachon (Charles 1976, p. 337, and Labi 1964, p. 183. Cf. also Girault and Frachon 1981, pp. 35–8).

239 In October, Monatte described his position in the following words: 'Amsterdam will have our subscriptions and Moscow will have our hearts' (quoted in Labi 1964, p. 184).

240 On this meeting of the CCN, cf. Labi 1964, pp. 186–7, Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, pp. 394–8, and Batsch and Bouvet 1983, pp. 136–7.

industry-wide federations or the department associations would have recourse to expulsions. The voting on the resolution showed that the hold of the Majority on the CCN was no longer as firm as it had been. Dumoulin's resolution received 72 votes out of the total of 120, while the Minority's resolution to the effect that the form of organisation was its own business received 25. But 23 representatives abstained. They mainly represented departmental associations and were more influenced by grassroots opinion than the representatives of the industry-wide federations. Dumoulin responded to this development by remarking 'Eunuchs!' Jouhaux was overcome with fury by the abstentions and threatened for the first time to resign. He had a certain amount of success with this threat: an additional appeal against 'dangers that threaten the organisation' was adopted by the meeting, and this time 103 votes were cast in favour. Finally a series of alterations to the statutes were made, which the Orleans congress had asked the CCN to implement. One of them was a new article by which the CGT proclaimed its membership of the IFTU.

The Minority continued to make progress in the weeks that followed. Its biggest successes were the conquest of the departmental associations of Paris and Lyons in December. But some federations which were firmly in the hands of the Majority now started to expel members of the Minority, relying on the resolution of the CCN.²⁴¹ At the end of December, there occurred an event which served as a warning to the Majority: the congress of the Socialist Party at Tours (25–30 December) resolved by a big majority to join the Comintern, thereby founding the French Communist Party (PCF). The minority were forced to split off and re-found the Socialist Party, under the same name, which had now 'become available'.²⁴² This development had already cast its shadow in advance in the previous months. The attitude of the CGT leadership towards the Socialist Party had already grown cooler, especially after they declared in their theses on the tasks of the impending party congress that they wanted to carry out the decisions of the Second Comintern Congress, which also signified that the party would intervene to form fractions in the trade unions.²⁴³ For the

241 Labi 1964, p. 192, and Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, p. 414.

242 On the Tours congress, cf. Wohl 1966, pp. 197–201, for example.

243 There had been a meeting of the CGT and the socialist leaderships in October, to agree a solidarity campaign for Russia. In that meeting, the CGT had demanded that the socialists refrain from following the trade-union line prescribed by the Comintern. It was finally agreed that a series of meetings would be held over the whole of France. These took place in November. There then followed the publication of the theses of the socialist leadership for the impending party congress, calling for support to be given to the Moscow trade union international. (Cf. Labi 1964, pp. 185–6).

CGT Majority, there was only one possible reply to this: 'Let us avoid suffering the fate of the socialist minority'.²⁴⁴

The next meeting of the Federal Committee, from 8-10 February 1921, decided to tighten the restrictions placed on the Minority.²⁴⁵ Dumoulin wanted to establish definitely that organisations were not entitled to join another international which had decided to destroy the international to which the CGT itself belonged. A member of the Minority, Mayoux, said in the meeting that if that was the view of the Majority, why not force the split that was coming anyway? The resolution finally adopted at the February meeting was less ambiguous than the October one: 'Organisations which join the trade union international belonging to the Comintern thereby place themselves outside the CGT and lose the right to take part in its Federal Congresses and National Committees'. This time there were fewer abstentions, and the resolution received 82 votes, with 31 members voting against it. The Minority then declared that they would not allow themselves to be forced out by the Majority. They wanted to remain in the CGT and to put forward their position at the next congress. The responsibility for a split lay with the Majority, they said.

The following months saw further moves in the same direction.²⁴⁶ The Minority gained control of a number of new trade-union sections (there were admittedly others which declared firmly in favour of the Majority). There were expulsions and actual splits, even among the industry-wide federations. The Majority became more and more convinced that they no longer had control of developments and that they risked losing their position. There were increasing calls to put a stop to the retreat. People spoke openly of splitting the CGT. Even Jouhaux, who, unlike Dumoulin or Merrheim, had hoped to find some kind of compromise, according to his biographers, now hardened his standpoint. The Majority must apply the emergency brakes, he said. At the CCN meeting of 12-13 May, the next congress of the CGT was brought forward from September to July, by the much narrower majority of 69 votes to 53, with 21 abstentions. It was hardly possible to imagine how a split could be prevented under such circumstances.

Even so, some voices were raised in favour of avoiding this outcome. The biographers of Jouhaux mention a series of elections in trade-union sections at which the CGT leadership received considerably more votes for its political

244 Batsch and Bouvet 1983, p. 141.

245 Batsch and Bouvet 1983, pp. 144-5, Labi 1964, pp. 193-5, and Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, p. 415.

246 The next section follows Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, pp. 412-23, Labi 1964, pp. 193-5, and Batsch and Bouvet 1983, pp. 144-6.

orientation than were cast in support of its sanctions against the CSRs, and they interpret these results as a sign of opposition to a split. Nevertheless, the spokesmen of the Majority made it plain that they would not allow themselves to be forced into a minority position: in such a case they would prefer a split.

Monatte, on the other hand, who was released from prison in March 1921, campaigned within the Minority, along with his closest friends, in favour of maintaining unity. The anarchists and 'pure' syndicalists, on the other hand, had made a secret pact in February 1921, which only came to light a year later, by which they agreed to push through the split they regarded as necessary, which would enable them to decide the direction of the new organisation. Before the CGT congress met in Lille on 25 July, however, an event occurred which created an unexpected situation and at the same time made it evident that serious conflicts existed within the Minority. At the founding congress of the RILU, which had taken place a little earlier (3–19 July) in Moscow, the majority of the CSR delegates, speaking on behalf of the syndicalist opposition, had rejected the Bolshevik view of the relationship between the RILU and the Comintern. But the advocates of the absolute autonomy of the trade unions were precisely the people who were pushing for a rapid break with the reformists. A fight on three fronts thus opened up, which appeared to provide the CGT leadership with greater room to manoeuvre. (See the next chapter for a discussion of the internal development of the CSR movement and the various currents within it).

In France, the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' could obviously only be answered by a split, even if this had not in fact taken place by July 1921, when the congress called by the ITUC finally met. In Italy a different situation had been created by the way the CGL leadership vacillated between Amsterdam and Moscow. The CGL was a founding member of the ITUC, but it had failed to clarify what that meant for its membership in the IFTU. On the other hand, it had already become clear during the delegates' stay in Moscow that the Bolsheviks were interested in recruiting the union itself, but not its leadership. Zinoviev had already declared at the Second Comintern Congress that D'Aragona was undoubtedly a reformist and that it was hoped that as soon as a congress of the CGL could meet – the last one had taken place in May 1914 – a revolutionary would be elected to the top position.²⁴⁷ At a session of the ECCI on 11 August, D'Aragona was named as one of those who should be expelled from the party.²⁴⁸ An Open Letter to the PSI drawn up

²⁴⁷ *Der zweite Kongress. Protokoll 1921*, p. 637 [English: Riddell 1991, p. 729].

²⁴⁸ M.K. 'Der erste Monat der Arbeit', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, pp. 270–6, here p. 273.

at this session contained a paragraph specially devoted to the ‘even worse’ situation in the trade unions, which were entirely in the hands of the reformists. It was intolerable that the trade-union leadership had still not called a congress. The party was under the obligation to remove it from office.²⁴⁹ In order to provide itself with another way of exerting pressure, the Comintern had also admitted the USI as a member (which smoothed the path for its entry into the ITUC). None of the Italian socialists who were still in Russia at the time took part in the ECCI session, but Borghi was there. When Serrati returned to Moscow at the beginning of September (shortly before he left Russia to go back to Italy), he protested vigorously against Borghi’s presence.²⁵⁰

The *Consiglio Direttivo* of the CGL had not yet been informed of all these developments, although D’Aragona and his colleagues may have suspected that there would be political opposition from Moscow, when on 24–25 August 1920 after hearing an extensive report from him it declared its agreement to the establishment of the ITUC. What was needed now, he said, in view of Amsterdam’s incompetence, was a ‘transformation’ of the trade-union movement. This was the purpose of the international congress called by the ITUC for January, which would take place either in Italy, Norway or Russia. According to a report in the CGL organ, there was unanimous agreement ‘after some remarks of secondary importance’ had been made. It was also announced that a special congress of the IFTU had been called, which would meet in London, and that the CGL had been allotted ten delegates. Apart from this, a resolution was passed criticising the hostile attitude of the IFTU towards Russia, and the decision to

249 ‘An das Zentralkomitee und alle Mitglieder der Sozialistischen Partei Italiens’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, pp. 287–95 [English: Degras 1956, pp. 188–91]. At the next ECCI session, on 25 August, the demand that the CGL call a congress immediately was repeated, on the proposal of John Reed (М.К., ‘Der erste Monat der Arbeit’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, p. 274). It was clear that they expected that the congress would lead to the fall of the current CGL leadership. The Comintern’s mode of proceeding was based on two (erroneous) calculations, which naturally had consequences particularly for the party, where they pushed for the immediate expulsion of the right wing even at the cost of a break with the ‘Centrists’ around Serrati: firstly, it underestimated the scale of the setback suffered as a result of the abandonment of the factory occupations, and therefore continued to regard the situation in Italy as revolutionary, and secondly, it proceeded from the assumption that the communist forces represented a majority of the party. On these points, cf. König 1967, pp. 108–9 and 111–12.

250 М.К. ‘Der erste Monat der Arbeit’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, p. 273, and ‘Sitzungen des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale’, *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, pp. 400–17, here p. 404. Cf. also König 1967, pp. 108–9 and 111.

end the boycott of Hungary.²⁵¹ The attitude of the Italians continued to display the contradictory character, one could even say the schizophrenia, which had already marked their behaviour in Moscow. On the one hand, they condemned Amsterdam and declared their readiness to co-operate with the Russians, but on the other, they accepted an invitation to the IFTU congress as if this were a matter of course. The main aim of the CGL leadership's tactics was to build something like a left wing in the IFTU, although this idea was only expressed hesitantly.

In the next few weeks, however, the whole of their attention was taken up by a series of events in the internal life of Italy which were to change the relationship of forces not only within the workers' movement but in the whole of Italian society: the factory occupations in the engineering industry of north Italy which began at the end of August, and the decision of mid-September which the CGL leadership made to call them off.²⁵² That led to a bitter dispute within the Italian workers' movement. The CGL leadership was accused of failing to utilise the revolutionary dynamic and of betraying the movement. There were already issues in dispute, such as the general question of 'reform or revolution' and the precise way that the junction with the Comintern was to be implemented, in view of the Twenty-One Conditions set by the Second Congress. Now a further source of disagreement between the different wings of the Socialist Party was added. A split became unavoidable; at the same time, the Fascists opened the offensive that would bring them to power two years later.²⁵³

The attitude of the CGL leadership to the factory occupations was one of the two questions in the Open Letter sent to the union by Lozovsky from Germany at the end of October, before he returned to Russia.²⁵⁴ The Russian trade-union delegation had originally wanted to travel to Italy as well, and informed the

251 *Battaglie sindacali*, 4 September 1920, printed in Marchetti 1962, pp. 294–7.

252 The standard work on the occupations continues to be Spriano 1964. Cf. also Williams 1975 and the contemporary analysis by Robert Michels, 'Die Versuche einer Besetzung der Betriebe durch die Arbeiter (1920)', in Michels 1925, pp. 201–50.

253 Cf. König 1967, pp. 109–43 and Spriano 1967, vol. 1, pp. 78–107 on the worsening of the situation within the party after the factory occupations and the preparations for a split. Baldesi and D'Aragona played an important part on the reformist wing of the party, producing, for example, the platform which the reformists adopted at their conference of 10–11 October 1920 in Reggio Emilia. This platform affirmed their commitment to the unity of the party, among other things. The party should be affiliated to the Comintern, but that body would have to respect national peculiarities (cf. Cortesi 1973, p. 260).

254 Losowski 1920c.

CGL to that effect in the middle of August, but they were unable to do so owing to the refusal of the Italian government to issue visas.²⁵⁵ All Lozovsky could do therefore was send a letter. In it he concentrated his criticism on two issues: first, the CGL's behaviour during the factory occupations, and second, its ambiguous position on the struggle between 'Moscow' and 'Amsterdam'. 'You must in any case admit', he wrote, 'that simultaneous membership in two organisations which are fighting each other must, in the best case, make the CGL into a passive observer of the struggle that is proceeding, since one cannot strike blows on behalf of two hostile armies at the same time. For the Amsterdam International Federation of Trade Unions and the Moscow International Trade Union Council are two hostile camps, two organisations which are locked in mutual combat'.²⁵⁶

The CGL leadership (the *Consiglio Direttivo*) approved its reply to Lozovsky at a meeting some days before the London Congress of the IFTU (the delegates for the latter congress were also chosen at this meeting).²⁵⁷ Not much was said about the question of why the CGL still belonged to the IFTU, of which it had been a member even before the war. The central point of the reply was an extended defence of the actions of the trade-union leadership with regard to the factory occupations. The motives which had induced it finally to break off the struggle were explained in detail. In any case, the letter added, people in Russia had too little understanding of Italian conditions. Russian methods could not be applied in Italy. This did not mean that the CGL had abandoned the agreement of 15 July, however. Opposition to that agreement had come from the syndicalists. D'Aragona, together with Lozovsky, had tried to persuade them to support it, and the former had himself signed it 'without reservation'. Later, the CGL leadership had approved his action.

255 Marchetti 1962, p. 294. As late as 29 September, when the workers had already begun leaving the factories, Lozovsky had not entirely given up hope of receiving permission to enter the country, as appears from a telegram he sent to Serrati (König 1967, p. 112, although he is mistaken when he says the delegation was specially sent out from Russia in response to the news of the factory occupations).

256 Losowski, *Offener Brief*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 7-8. Incidentally, one of the Italian delegates in Moscow, who had been on the Volga trip where Lozovsky had acted as travel guide, made this comment in his report of the trip, in relation to the Open Letter: 'I cannot understand how this man, so brimful of politeness, who had a particularly close relationship with D'Aragona, could later, after we had returned to Italy, write such a harsh letter as the one he sent from Berlin to *Avanti!* which for a socialist was insulting, and was particularly directed against the same D'Aragona' (Vacirca 1921, p. 124).

257 Marchetti 1962, pp. 307-9. The text of the reply is printed in D'Aragona and Baldesi 1921, pp. 21-9.

In the next few days, the CGL leaders at the London Congress of the IFTU had to experience how little support they had for their oppositional attitude there (at least from the leaders of the unions). They also found that the majority of the delegates at the London Congress demanded that they draw a line under their 'separatist activities'. In view of this, and in view of the attack on them by Moscow, the CGL leaders were compelled to take up an unambiguous position, given the approach of the CGL congress which was due to meet at the end of February 1921 in Livorno. In the documentation on 'international relations' which was put together by D'Aragona and Baldesi to aid the debates at the congress,²⁵⁸ it was now stated without reservation that the CGL did not want to leave the Amsterdam International, although it did not withdraw its criticisms of Amsterdam. The London Congress of the IFTU had, nevertheless, represented a move to the left, they said. The resolutions adopted there may not have been those they would have liked, but time would prove that the CGL was right. One cannot simply leave an organisation millions of members strong, they added. The Russians should follow the line taken by the Italians. There was also an extra argument, which pointed forward to an aspect of the problem that in later years was to play a significant role in the conflict between Amsterdam and Moscow: if the CGL were to leave the IFTU, its individual trade unions would themselves have to leave the International Trade Secretariats to which they were attached.²⁵⁹

But then an event occurred which had been expected for several months: the party congress of the Italian socialists, which met in Livorno between 15–21 January 1921. The 'centrist' party leadership around Serrati, which, like the CGL, also counted as part of the Comintern at that stage, refused to agree to the demand for an organisational break with the reformists, which had been raised both by Moscow and by the radical left within the party itself. The supporters of the Comintern line responded by withdrawing from the congress, partly because their hand was strengthened by the representatives of the Comintern who were present at Livorno. They then founded a separate party, which immediately declared its entry into the Comintern. (Despite this, the PSI also held onto its membership of the Comintern).²⁶⁰

258 This brochure consisted of a preface by Baldesi and D'Aragona, the texts of the 15 July agreement, Lozovsky's Open Letter and the reply by the CGL, the memorandum handed to the London Congress on the Moscow agreement, the London resolutions along with explanations by D'Aragona, and finally a detailed justification of the position they wanted the CGL to adopt now.

259 D'Aragona and Baldesi 1921, pp. 51–9.

260 On these events, cf. for example König 1967, pp. 144–9 and Spriano 1967, vol. 1, pp. 108–21.

This changed the situation for the CGL leadership, because it now had to reckon with strong opposition from the communists at its own congress. It is true that the majority of the trade-union leaders belonged to the right wing of the PSI, and therefore tended rather to oppose the policy of the party majority around Serrati, but they now had an interest in standing shoulder to shoulder with the party leadership in order to fend off the communists more effectively, just as, conversely, Serrati was dependent on the trade-union leaders as his allies on the right.

Even before the congress at which the socialists split, the communists had already declared (at a conference of their faction at the end of November 1920 in Imola) that the pact between the CGL and the PSI must be annulled because it 'inappropriately expressed' relations between the party and the trade unions. It must be replaced by the principle of the conquest of hegemony in the trade unions by members of the party. The CGL, it was added, should join the ITUC without reservation.²⁶¹

The communists also made it clear at the congress, through their main speaker Terracini, that they wanted to hold fast to the unity of the CGL, and that the party split should not mean a split in the trade unions as well. He added, at the risk of being accused of supporting anarchism, that the communists also wanted to fight to establish genuine trade-union unity, which meant including the USI and the independent syndicalist organisations of the railway workers, the seamen and the dockers. But in saying this, all he achieved was to provoke a series of demagogic interruptions from the reformists, for whom the mention of the USI was like waving a red rag at a bull, on account of the conflict with them after the abandonment of the factory occupations in September. They even insinuated that he also wanted unity with the 'white' (Catholic) trade unions.²⁶² Immediately after the Italian communist party had been founded its newly elected central committee confirmed that it had no intention of splitting the CGL at the trade-union congress which was shortly to meet. What it wanted instead was 'to organise a strong communist opposition against the opportunist and collaborationist policy of its leaders.'²⁶³

261 Pillon 1972, p. 81.

262 Cf. the extracts from the minutes quoted in Pillon 1972, pp. 82-3.

263 Quoted in König 1967, p. 151. Cf. also *Resoconto stenografico del XVII Congresso* 1962, pp. 456-76, here p. 474. In the same publication there is also information on a meeting of the communists in preparation for the CGL congress after the split in the PSI (*Resoconto stenografico del XVII Congresso* 1962, pp. 452-3).

The atmosphere one could expect at the fifth congress of the CGL,²⁶⁴ which took place between 26 February and 3 March 1921, also in Livorno, was evident right from the start of the proceedings. When Fimmen tried to deliver the greetings of the IFTU there were catcalls and violent disturbances. He was unable to gain a hearing. D'Aragona attempted to calm the congress by saying that the question of their membership of the IFTU had still to be discussed. They were still members of the IFTU, just as they were also members of the Moscow International. In any case, Amsterdam did not consist simply of social traitors. The Norwegian trade unions also belonged to the IFTU and Fimmen himself stood on the left wing. His intervention did not help. What did help was an interjection that the delegates from the PSI who were present had previously permitted the PCI to greet the congress in their name. A communist speaker then declared that they would allow Fimmen to speak, but that they demanded the same right to speak in Amsterdam. The Italian trade unions, he said, would only be members of the IFTU for a short while longer. Fimmen then delivered his 'fraternal and revolutionary' greetings to the congress in the name of no fewer than fifty million proletarians and made a short appeal to the delegates to remain in the IFTU.²⁶⁵

The most important part of the congress was the discussion of the report of the CGL leadership on the period since the last congress, which had met in 1914.²⁶⁶ This lasted for more than three days and led into a general discussion of political differences and future perspectives. After that, there were only two short resolutions to be voted on, containing either approval of the report – introduced by the socialist trade unionists – or its rejection – introduced by the communists. The small group of revolutionary syndicalists withdrew the resolution they had originally put forward, supporting instead the communist resolution. The result was disappointing for the communists; they received only a quarter of the votes (432,558 against 1,435,873 and 17,371 abstentions).²⁶⁷

264 Cf. the minutes, *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso 1922*. Although this congress throws light on the relation of forces immediately after the socialist split, it is surprisingly passed over by Spriano, but it is given due weight by König 1967, pp. 151–2.

265 *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso 1922*, pp. 11–15. The IFTU was represented at this congress by Oudegeest as well as Fimmen. But it was not by chance that it was only the left-winger Fimmen who spoke in further debates at the congress.

266 The report, which was jointly delivered by Baldesi and D'Aragona, and the subsequent discussion, are printed in *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso 1922*, pp. 21–265. The report also lay on the table as a publication (Rigola and D'Aragona 1921).

267 *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso 1922*, p. 292.

With this, the further course of the congress was essentially determined, and the arguments could only be repeated. A number of organisational questions, such as finances and the matter of a daily newspaper for the trade-union movement, were treated almost in passing, and then the irreconcilable views of the two rival groupings again came into conflict, in the discussion of the relationship between the trade unions and the party, in other words the pact of 1918. This point of the agenda did not, however, cause as much of a stir as the discussion of the executive's report. The socialist resolution, to continue to develop relations between the CGL and the PSI in the sense of the 1918 pact, was accepted by acclamation. The communists, on the other hand, had already proposed that national questions should be subordinate to international ones, and that the congress should proceed to discuss these.²⁶⁸ But before the congress started discussing this point of the agenda, there was an event which pointed in an entirely different direction, towards unity: a resolution was introduced from the floor of the congress and accepted by acclamation, without discussion, in which all the independent 'class trade unions' were exhorted to join the CGL and thus bring about unity. A month before, at the party congress, such an idea had been greeted with loud protests from the CGL leadership, but now the same people introduced it as a clever tactical move, intended to take the wind out of the sails of the communists.²⁶⁹ After all, they had not forgotten that in the previous year Moscow had fairly obviously brought the USI into play as a way of pressuring them. On the other hand, if the syndicalists were to join, it is true that possibly inconvenient critics would have been taken on board, but the weight of the CGL as an organisation would have been strengthened. Everything ultimately depended on the conditions under which this unity would be accomplished. The communists, too, accepted the idea, because they thought unity would improve the prospects for a revolutionised CGL.²⁷⁰

International affairs were discussed on the penultimate day of the congress. In his introductory report, Baldesi listed the following international activities

268 *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso* 1922, pp. 273–92.

269 *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso* 1922, pp. 296–7 and König 1967, p. 151.

270 The USI, for its part, did not react very enthusiastically to these 'siren voices of proletarian unity', since they could only end in the subordination of the trade unions to party control (cf. Antonioli 1990, pp. 111–12). In fact, there had already been various attempts to restore unity, above all in 1919, but they quickly failed. A further attempt, still less successful, would follow in October–November 1922, after the CGL had announced the end of its pact with the PSI as a result of that party's decision to expel the reformists (see Antonioli 1990, pp. 46–70 and 150–1).

and events: the CGL's support for the anti-war movement during the world war, the CGL's experience at the Washington Labour Conference and the formation of an opposition in the IFTU. The latter had moved somewhat to the left as a result. He then enumerated various negative consequences which might result from joining the Moscow trade-union international. The individual member trade unions of the CGL would find their membership of the International Trade Secretariats threatened. IFTU membership was also important to facilitate work among Italians who had emigrated. Despite all this, he then declared all of a sudden that the CGL wanted to join Moscow, even though he used a long-winded formulation which almost concealed this, clearly because he himself did not agree with the decision in principle. He did, however, allow the reasons for this decision to emerge: the CGL was associated with the PSI, and it wanted to use entry into the future red trade-union international as a pledge to guarantee that the PSI remained the Comintern's Italian section. 'Yes', he said, 'we shall either enter the Moscow trade union international with banners unfurled together with the socialist party or we shall not enter at all'.

Baldesi's justification for entering the Moscow international could not of course be accepted by the communists, since they were pressing precisely for the abandonment of the pact between the CGL and the PSI. Their speakers rose to charge Baldesi with being completely inconsistent, and with having a hidden agenda which was quite different from his public declarations. They could only join Moscow, the communists said, if they adopted the appropriate political basis. But it was Fimmen who was most surprised by this turn of events, and he himself entered the discussion, which was an unusual step for an international guest to take. He had previously been certain, he said, that the CGL wanted to remain in the IFTU. But now they said they wanted to leave it, simply 'for love of the Italian socialist party'. That would cause great political damage. He then launched into an extensive presentation of the policies of the IFTU, declaring that it had nothing to do with the Second International, despite the assertions of the communists. The Second International was dead. The IFTU itself embodied international proletarian action. To leave the IFTU would have exactly the negative consequences Baldesi had already indicated. Multicoloured as the CGL was, with its socialists, communists and syndicalists, there was also a place in the IFTU for these different positions.

But Fimmen's appeal was in vain, because the CGL leadership's need to maintain its position alongside the socialist party was a powerful motive in favour of joining Moscow. Indeed, Baldesi criticised Fimmen in his closing speech. The latter had not said a single word about the CGL's criticisms of Amsterdam's policies, criticisms that were made not because of instructions from Moscow but on the basis of their own experiences. The representatives

of two small minority groups also announced their intention to speak in order to justify their decision to abstain. A group of reformist delegates from Genoa declared that the written material presented to the congress – the report of D'Aragona and Baldesi – was absolutely at variance with the attitude now proclaimed, of wanting to join the Moscow international. (Shortly before the vote took place, they in fact made a fresh declaration: they would vote for the CGL leadership's proposal after all). Representatives of an anarchist group also spoke. The anarchists declared that they rejected the notions of the conquest of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Once these preliminaries were out of the way, the two rival resolutions came to the vote. One resolution stated that the CGL would go to Moscow to the international trade-union congress on condition that relations with the PSI were still permitted and the principle of trade-union unity was recognised; if appropriate resolutions were passed on both of these issues in Moscow, the CGL would then break with the IFTU. The other resolution was brought in by the communists, and demanded an immediate condemnation of Amsterdam and an organisational break, as well as a break with the PSI, the establishment of relations with the PCI and, of course, participation in the Red International of Labour Unions. The result of the vote was similar to that on the first point of the congress agenda: the CGL leadership won an unequivocal victory with 1,354,226 votes against 418,425 for the communist resolution and 21,347 abstentions.²⁷¹

Thus the communists were clearly in the minority, receiving roughly a quarter of the vote when the important decisions were taken. This was far fewer than they could have expected on the basis of the results of the balloting a month before at the party congress. There they had received roughly 34 percent. So they were a long way away from achieving the conquest of the CGL predicted in the manifesto issued by the communist party's founding congress.²⁷² It is impossible to decide whether this result was simply a more realistic representation of the influence of the communists, or they had lost a lot of ground in the course of a month (both of these possibilities are suggested by König),²⁷³ or, finally, that it reflected the attractive force exerted by the fact

²⁷¹ The report and the discussion are printed in *Resoconto stenografico del x congresso 1922*, pp. 299–345, and the voting figures are on pp. 355–6.

²⁷² Cf. the extract quoted in Pillon 1972, p. 86.

²⁷³ He writes that these, and other voting results too, 'showed that the young communist party of Italy was able to gain the support of only roughly 23 percent of the group of members and voters it specifically laid claim to, namely the organised working class engaged in the class struggle. The voting figures at the time of the party split of 21 January 1921, in contrast, had allowed them to hope for around 34 percent. Both figures were far removed from the

that the Serrati group and the reformists had been able to combine together in a joint resolution, even though at the party congress they had been in conflict with each other. There may be yet another reason for the apparent reduction in communist support: the way the trade unions were structured. The communists had greater proportional strength in the local federations, whereas the opposite was the case with the national unions of the specific trades.²⁷⁴ Hence as long as the socialist bloc acted together, and this was the case right up to the expulsion of the reformists from the PSI in October 1922, the communists were condemned to a minority position. In any case, by October 1922, the context was completely different owing to the successful seizure of power by the Fascists.

With the resolution passed at its fifth congress, the CGL had at least theoretically set out on the path to the communist trade-union international. But the resolution was hedged around with so many provisos and it was so clear that it was merely a means of exerting pressure to achieve a quite different purpose that it was hardly possible to imagine how it could be put into effect at the Moscow congress. Nevertheless, it was a severe setback for Amsterdam and it evoked a corresponding reaction in Social Democratic circles. The USPD's daily newspaper, *Freiheit*, described the resolution as 'indefensible' and 'impossible in practical terms'. The CGL had decided to 'enter the anteroom of the Moscow dictators, where D'Aragona and Baldesi can expect nothing but a kicking'. In fact there was strong approval in the communist camp for the idea of kicking D'Aragona and Baldesi. In a commentary on the USPD's reaction, the organ of the Berlin bureau of the ITUC asserted that D'Aragona, Baldesi and the rest had only made this decision 'so as to avoid being thrown out of their comfortable seats', because the Italian workers wanted to join Moscow.²⁷⁵ The headquarters of the ITUC described the Italian decision somewhat more cautiously as 'a reinsurance policy', and expressed the hope that the CGL would be represented at the Moscow trade-union congress and definitively accomplish its withdrawal from Amsterdam. In Moscow, they also made endeavours to exert effective pressure on the CGL by again inviting the USI and the independent trade unions of the seamen and railwaymen to come to the congress.²⁷⁶

"75 to 90 percent" prediction Zinoviev had made in the ECCI session of 3 November 1920, which he may have been misled into making by the optimistic forecasts of his special agents on Italian soil' (König 1967, p. 152).

274 Pillon makes this point (1972, p. 89).

275 Else Gäbel, 'Die italienischen Arbeiter verzichten auf den Amsterdamer "Zucker"', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 14, 23 April 1921.

276 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 50–1.

In this situation, Amsterdam tried all it could to gain support, indicating plainly that financial advantages would also be gained by staying with the IFTU.²⁷⁷ Because the negotiations between the Great Powers on the reparations problem had broken down again, the IFTU bureau, meeting on 14–15 March, called a conference with the representatives of the trade unions of the countries in question, to meet at the end of the month. The CGL was included in the invitation, but it was the only union that did not attend. On 28 April, the IFTU bureau resolved to provide financial support to the CGL 'for the struggle against the reaction'.²⁷⁸ Moreover, the next IFTU congress was scheduled to take place in Italy (it was envisaged that it would meet in November or December 1921). The IFTU executive, at its first meeting after the London Congress, in May 1921, confirmed the payment of 50,000 lire of financial support to the CGL, and the date of November for the next congress. But it left the decision on the meeting-place to be made later by the bureau, without giving any reason. It can be assumed that the members of the IFTU executive, having heard of the CGL congress decision, albeit conditional, to join Moscow, had got cold feet and now wanted to wait to see how things would develop. (The next IFTU congress did in fact take place in Rome, though not until April 1922, after the CGL had definitively broken off relations with the RILU).

In the German trade unions, events inevitably unfolded in a very different way. After the 1920 split in the USPD, which until then had been the main element of the oppositional movement within the trade unions, there was a regrouping of forces. While the right-wing 'remnant' of the USPD increasingly made common cause with the SPD in the trade unions, the communists, who until then had been a weak force in the ADGB, now acquired a mass base through their merger with the left wing of the USPD, which had a large number of experienced trade unionists in its ranks.²⁷⁹ A joint provisional leadership

277 The information that follows on meetings of the IFTU is taken from the reports in *International Trades Union Review*, no. 8, July 1921. (The reports in this organ of the TUC are fuller than those in the IFTU's own *Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*).

278 The report does not say what lay behind this initiative by the IFTU bureau. The national council of the CGL had discussed the Fascist terror at length at its session of 22–25 April, and it had decided to inform the 'council of the trade union international' and 'the whole world' about this. Whether this meant informing Moscow or Amsterdam was unclear. Presumably the IFTU bureau was responding to this information. At its May session, the *Consiglio Direttivo* of the CGL took note of the support from the IFTU and publicised it in its newspaper (Marchetti 1962, pp. 327–30). This would undoubtedly have given great satisfaction to the secret friends of Amsterdam in Italy, since no material support of this kind arrived from Moscow.

279 On this point, cf. the general overview by Gerhard Laubscher (1979).

for trade-union work had already been set up after the Halle party congress of the USPD, and a joint meeting on trade-union work took place just before the unification congress.²⁸⁰

In December 1920, at the unification congress, the question of trade-union work logically occupied a considerable place in the proceedings.²⁸¹ Comprehensive theses on the trade unions were adopted. They covered trade-union demands, the relationship between trade unions and factory councils, the question of the industrial unions and above all the formation of communist fractions and cells in the trade unions. A special section of the theses dealt with the question of the trade-union internationals. The revolutionary trade unions, it said, were now uniting to confront Amsterdam's policies of class collaboration and treason. 'The task of the communists in the trade unions is to make sure that the German trade unions accomplish their withdrawal from the Amsterdam International and affiliate with the Red International of Labour Unions.'²⁸² This perspective did not meet with any opposition. Problems only became apparent in connection with the 'Unions', an expression which applied in particular to the Gelsenkirchen Union (FAU-G), which had split off from the syndicalists and had its main strength in the mining districts of the Ruhr. The issue of 'Unions' was something that was to concern the KPD for a considerable length of time, although there was no doubt at this party congress that all calls to leave the existing trade unions were rejected on principle.

The concentration of communist oppositional work on the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam' inevitably intensified the conflict over organisational affiliation within the ADGB and its members. There had been expulsions from the movement even before the establishment of the ITUC. One particularly prominent case was the expulsion of the KPD leader Ottomar Geschke in the spring of 1920. He had been elected to chair the union of German railway workers in Berlin, but had not received the necessary confirmation from the chief executive of the union. The election was repeated twice with the same result, until finally, after he clashed angrily with them at a Berlin members' meeting, the

280 On this, see a January 1921 report sent to the ITUC, which was translated from *Izvestiia* and printed in the journal of the British communist party ('The United Communist Party of Germany and the Trade Unions', *Communist Review*, no. 1, May 1921, p. 30).

281 The discussion of the trade union point of the agenda occupies pp. 155–91 of the minutes (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Vereinigungsparteitages 1921*), while the theses on the trade unions are on pp. 254–61. Incidentally, the representative of the British communist party was Robert Williams, who brought with him a long message of greeting (pp. 23–6). Cf. also Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 125–34 on the unification congress.

282 *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Vereinigungsparteitages 1921*, p. 260.

executive ordered his expulsion. In September, the general assembly of the German Union of Railway Workers (DEV) approved the decision by a narrow majority.²⁸³ Disciplinary measures were constantly put into effect as a result of the multiplicity of internal trade-union conflicts, most of which arose from disagreements either about the way to conduct wage-struggles or about fundamental questions about the direction of trade-union activity. The conflict over the trade-union internationals was a prolongation of these disputes and added an extra dimension to them.

The main conflict was always between the communist fractions in the trade unions (which had influence over the lower levels of the trade union), on the one hand, and the SPD and USPD-led trade-union executives, on the other. Trade-union contacts between Germany and Russia played only a subsidiary role. The Russian trade-union delegation, which was in Germany in September and October 1920, had only informal meetings with trade unionists, and these indeed led to open confrontation, on account of Lozovsky's activities. Only in one case did a section of the ADGB seek direct contact with 'Moscow'. Early in 1920, Shliapnikov had visited Berlin, during his attempts to resuscitate the IMF, and he had invited the local trade-union commission, which was dominated by the USPD, to send a delegation to Moscow. The commission did in fact send a 'study group' consisting of three people, following the British and Italian example, and it stayed in Russia for almost three months.²⁸⁴ The Majority Social Democratic (MSPD) section of the trade-union commission had political reservations about this, but the fact that the three representatives who went to Russia were members of the USPD and thus non-communists appeared to offer a guarantee that they would not 'come adrift' politically. Moreover, their task was exclusively the gathering of information; they were not expected to forge political links. One of the members of the 'study group' was Oskar Rusch, the head of the Berlin DMV, who was also temporary chairman of the Berlin trade-union commission. He was a prominent member of the USPD who had been in the SPD until two years previously, at which time, as a Berlin metalworker, he had strongly opposed the movement of Revolutionary Shop Stewards. His participation in the investigation into the circumstances of Rosa Luxemburg's

283 *Deutscher Eisenbahner-Verband. Rechenschaftsbericht des Vorstandes vom 1. April 1919 bis 1. Juli 1920*, Berlin, p. 147; *Deutscher Eisenbahner-Verband. Protokoll der Verhandlungen der ausserordentlichen Generalversammlung. Abgehalten in Dresden vom 12. bis 18. September 1920*, no place or date of publication, pp. 17-19; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2. Parteitages 1922*, p. 33.

284 31. *Jahres- und Kassenbericht 1920 der Gewerkschaftskommission Berlins und Umgegend*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 27-9.

murder and his involvement in the street battles in Berlin during 1919 had radicalised him and induced a change in his party allegiance. Even so, he still counted as a man on the right of the USPD, and was fiercely attacked by the communists. The second member of the group, Willy Schumacher, the head of the Berlin Clothing Workers' Union, was equally exposed to communist criticisms. The surname of the third participant was Czerny, and he came from the Bookbinders' Union.

They arrived at Petrograd in the middle of August. They then travelled to Moscow and proceeded to make journeys all over Russia, which lasted until they returned to Germany in November. They wrote a series of letters from Russia, which displayed a very critical attitude towards the realities of the revolution.²⁸⁵ In one letter, Schumacher gave this drastic comment on the perspectives for the USPD in view of its impending merger with the KPD, which he had learned about in Moscow: 'For God's sake! I'm not going to go to Canossa!' He also expressed a disparaging opinion of the perspectives offered by the International Trade Union Council, in view of the controversies to be expected from the inclusion of the syndicalists. When the delegation had a joint session with the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS) in the middle of September, and was directly confronted with the question of its attitude to the ITUC, it even refused to distribute the literature issued by the latter institution in Germany.²⁸⁶ The German group 'by no means made a favourable impression' on the Russians, said Jarotsky. After the group had acted in a similar way at a provincial trade-union conference, the Moscow trade-union leadership issued an open letter to the workers of Berlin denouncing its behaviour (at the suggestion of the ITUC). It reproached the German delegation for adopting a purely formal attitude. It was 'indecisive' and its sympathy was purely 'platonic'. The proletariat needed its staff to be revolutionary; 'indecision' was as disastrous as treason.²⁸⁷

Even so, the members of this 'study group' took an entirely different attitude once they had returned to Berlin. Their experiences in Russia had made a deep impression on them. They now felt they were free from the obligations imposed on them by the precise mandate they had been given by the

285 Some of these letters are printed in a pamphlet issued by the German Clothing Workers' Union. (*Kommunistische Zerstörungsarbeit in den freien Gewerkschaften*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 19–25).

286 This point is mentioned in Jarotzki 1921, p. 341.

287 There are extracts from the letter in Jarotzki 1921, p. 342. Cf. also RGASPI 534/3/2/9. There is a commentary on it, taken from a USPD newspaper, in the pamphlet *Kommunistische Zerstörungsarbeit in den freien Gewerkschaften*, pp. 28–9.

general trade-union commission. They declared their allegiance to the Russian Revolution at a series of meetings, coming out against Amsterdam and calling for the German trade unions to affiliate to the ITUC. According to a report in *Die Rote Fahne*, Schumacher received overwhelming agreement for this step from over 2,000 participants in a Berlin meeting of members of the Clothing Workers' Union. Moreover, the chairman of the Russian Union of Chemical Workers, Belen'ky, took part as a guest in some of the Berlin meetings.²⁸⁸

All three delegates to Russia became members of the KPD, and at least Rusch and Schumacher were subsequently to play an important part in the trade-union work of the party. Rusch was described as one of the 'most prominent German trade unionists' at the unification congress of the Left USPD and the KPD,²⁸⁹ and he became a member of the Central European Bureau of the ITUC and then of the RILU. In view of this about-turn – which is more reminiscent of a Damascene conversion than the road to Canossa referred to by Schumacher – the Moscow trade-union council found itself, at the beginning of January, obliged to address the trade unionists of Berlin again, this time congratulating them on their emphatic support for communism.²⁹⁰

One result of this, which of course was not so much in the interests of the communists, was that in the December elections for the leadership of the Berlin DMV, the SPD and the Right USPD now stood together more resolutely against the supporters of the united communist party. The joint social-democratic ('Amsterdam') list was victorious by the narrow majority of 31,611 to 30,272 over the 'Moscow' list headed by Rusch. Only approximately a third of the members of the union had participated in this election, although it was conducted 'with unusual passion and intensity' according to a DMV publication.²⁹¹ The rival parties had similar confrontations in elections for the leadership of the Clothing Workers' and Woodworkers' Unions which also took place at this

288 See 'Die Gewerkschaftsdelegation über Sowjetrussland', *Die Internationale. Zentralorgan der Unabhängigen Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands*, no. 10, 6 November 1920; see also 'Die Bekleidungsarbeiter für die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale' and 'Die Gewerkschaftsdelegierten über Räterussland', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 230, 10 November 1920.

289 *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Vereinigungsparteitages* 1921, p. 176.

290 'An die revolutionären Gewerkschaftsmitglieder Berlins!', *Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 3, January 1921.

291 Cf. Opel 1957, p. 113 (this is the source of the quotation), and Högl 1982, pp. 342–4. See also the commentary in the KPD's new trade-union journal: P.E. 'Die Differenzen unter den Berliner Metallarbeitern', *Der kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 2, 15 January 1921.

time in Berlin. On each occasion, the supporters of affiliation to the ITUC were narrowly defeated.²⁹²

The lesson drawn by the Berlin Trade Union Commission, now emphatically social-democratic in tendency, from what they saw as the failure of the study group's mission to Moscow, can almost be read as an anticipation of the future social-democratic attitude towards the movement for sending workers' delegations to Russia which began in the mid-1920s: if the issue of further study trips should come up in the future, 'we shall have to be much more careful in determining who is to be chosen for this task, to avoid repeating the last unfortunate experience. What we need are men with a firmly fixed view of life and the breadth of vision necessary to go into things in depth, to grasp relationships and issues as they really are, to judge them correctly and without preconceived notions and to report on the situation'.²⁹³

After their return from Russia, Rusch and Schumacher endeavoured to persuade the German trade-union movement to participate in the trade-union congress called by Moscow. A big campaign now followed with the same objective. It was organised by the Berlin bureau of the ITUC, which had been set up in the meantime. Around the turn of the year, the Berlin bureau sent letters to the individual trade unions that were members of the ADGB, inviting them to appoint delegates to the international trade-union congress which was scheduled to take place in Moscow on 1 May 1921. There was no attempt to approach the executive of the ADGB, presumably because they were certain of a negative reply. But the individual trade unions, none of which had a communist leadership, themselves turned straight to the ADGB for a response. The ADGB executive reacted by sending a letter on 27 January to all the executives of its member unions, in which it advised them 'to reject the invitation and to inform the representative of Moscow that all negotiations with German trade unions on this international matter must be conducted through the medium of the federal executive'. The individual unions accordingly sent letters of rejection to the Berlin bureau of the ITUC.²⁹⁴ That the ADGB would have rejected a direct approach by the ITUC is therefore clear and does not require to be demonstrated. The federal committee of the ADGB had already unanimously adopted a general condemnation of communist 'cell-building' at its mid-December sit-

292 31. *Bericht der Gewerkschaftskommission Berlins*, 1920, p. 30; Högl 1982, pp. 344–5.

293 31. *Bericht der Gewerkschaftskommission Berlins*, 1920, p. 29.

294 The relevant correspondence between the ADGB, the individual trade unions and the 'Secretariat of the Bureau of the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions' (in other words the ITUC) is preserved in the ADGB archive at the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, reference NB 12.

ting, and it had called on its members to take steps against this.²⁹⁵ The leading bodies of a number of individual trade unions also resolved on similar measures to draw a clear line of demarcation between their members and the communists, in part directly referring to the conflict between Amsterdam and Moscow. The most important of these was a resolution issued by the advisory board of the DMV in the middle of January instructing the union executive to proceed against the communist opposition, going as far as expulsion if necessary.²⁹⁶

In these weeks, the confrontation over the issue of Moscow or Amsterdam occupied the foreground of communist trade-union work.²⁹⁷ Later on, in the summer of 1921, in the context of internal organisational disagreements in the party, prominent KPD trade unionists referred back to this in a self-critical way (cf. section 6.1 of this chapter). However, it was not the only trade-union work that the communists did. The KPD even succeeded in starting a successful initiative, with the Open Letter of 7 January 1921, which formulated a programme of immediate demands, proposing it to all workers' organisations, the trade unions first and foremost. This set the social-democratic organisations considerable problems of demarcation.²⁹⁸ But when the communist party, overestimating its influence, took the opportunity to pick quarrels over organisational matters in a number of its strongholds, such as Halle, it was unable to make any headway.²⁹⁹ A little later, it suffered its most significant setback in the shape of the failure of the 'March Action', the attempted communist uprising in Central Germany.³⁰⁰

Although various lower-level union branches had signified their general orientation towards Moscow, the party was unable to carry this any further and to persuade the trade unions themselves to elect delegates to the Moscow meeting. It therefore changed its tactics. As the ADGB organ announced at the end of

295 This is documented in Ruck 1985, pp. 250–2.

296 Laubscher 1979, pp. 214–15. On similar decisions by other trade unions, see Laubscher 1979, pp. 211–13.

297 As Wentzel comments: 'All elections within the trade unions – from elections to administrative positions in the Berlin DMV to the choice of delegates to the congress of the DMV – were conducted around the issue "Moscow or Amsterdam". Problems of organisation and general principles of trade union politics were thus pushed to the forefront, thereby diverting attention from concrete internal trade-union disputes' (1981, p. 109).

298 On this, see among other sources Potthoff 1979, p. 362, Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 135–6 and Laubscher 1979, pp. 203–4.

299 On the situation in Halle, see the very detailed account by Potthoff (1979, pp. 363–7). See also Wentzel, 1981, p. 107.

300 The fundamental work on the March Action is Koch-Baumgarten (1986). See also Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 138–44, for its impact on the party's trade-union work.

February, the KPD's *Reichsgewerkschaftszentrale* (a national trade-union centre created in December after the unification congress to supervise work in the trade unions) decided that the election of delegates should take place at conferences of the communist fractions, which were to be set up in trade unions covering every branch of economic activity. In places where this did not happen, the party itself would name the delegates.³⁰¹

In accordance with this decision, a 'Reich Conference of Communist Metalworkers and Sympathisers with the Moscow Trade Union International' met on 28 February. 231 delegates represented 150 localities, most of them members of communist trade-union fractions. 34 local branches of the DMV had also sent official delegates to the conference. The main subject of the conference was the conflict with the line of approach taken by the DMV leadership. In accordance with this, the discussion covered questions of wage-struggles, the co-operation of the union leadership with the employers and internal organisational conflicts. A special point on the agenda, however, was: 'Representation at the Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions'. Rusch gave the main speech on this subject. He informed the conference that the DMV chairman, Dißmann, had not even replied to the invitation sent by the Bureau of the ITUC to all German trade unions. In response to that, it was resolved to send three delegates to Moscow. Although they would not be able to appear officially in the name of the DMV, they would represent the communist metalworkers.³⁰²

Similar conferences took place over a period from the end of January to the end of May 1921 for the following branches: transport workers, construction workers, woodworkers, clothing workers, textile workers, leather workers, miners, railway workers and workers in the graphic and design trades.³⁰³ In reporting the election of these delegates, the KPD organ stressed that their sole

301 'Falsche Vertretung deutscher Gewerkschaften auf dem Moskauer Gewerkschaftskongress', *Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 9, 26 February 1921.

302 See *Protokoll der Reichskonferenz der kommunistischen und mit der Moskauer Gewerkschafts-Internationale sympathisierenden Metallarbeiter*, Berlin, 1921. The report of the Credentials Committee of the conference is on pp. 48–9, and Busch's speech is on pp. 56–62. The three delegates were Richard Müller, Max Hausding and Jakob Greis.

303 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, pp. 32–3. We were able to find a copy of the minutes of the woodworkers' conference: *Erste Reichskonferenz der kommunistischen Holzarbeiter am 24 April 1921. Protokoll*, Berlin, undated. Here too Rusch spoke on the theme 'Moscow or Amsterdam'. After that, delegates were elected without discussion, in view of the refusal of the woodworkers' union to elect them or even to reply to the Moscow invitation (pp. 44–8).

purpose was to gather information. 'They are not competent to make a decision either to leave the Amsterdam Trade Union International or to affiliate to the Moscow International'. After all, it was pointed out, the aim was to prise the German trade unions away from the IFTU as a whole.³⁰⁴

Notwithstanding such protestations on the part of the communist press before the Moscow congress, the reaction of the trade-union executives was quick to follow. The DMV executive, which had already warned against taking part in the congress, started to mount a series of expulsion proceedings against participants whose names were known to them. It was only because a general assembly of the DMV was due to take place in August, in Jena, that they limited themselves to issuing 15 official rebukes or expulsions. Once the USPD-SPD majority under the leadership of Dißmann had been confirmed in office at the Jena meeting, many other expulsions followed.³⁰⁵ There were also expulsions from other trade unions, particularly the Building Workers' Union, in which the communist opposition controlled the local organisation in Chemnitz.³⁰⁶ For the KPD, the question then arose of whether the expellees should be combined together in separate organisations. This happened most prominently in the case of the building workers. But to take such a step was to run the risk of creating parallel organisations. This conundrum would lead to lengthy discussions when the foundation congress of the RILU took place.

304 'Der Kampf um die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 88, 22 February 1921. Jacob Walcher, a member of the KPD national trade-union centre, confirmed this position a few weeks before the start of the Moscow congress. Even though millions of workers in Germany sympathise with the RILU, he said, 'we would regard it as a mistake for these masses of people to adhere formally to the RILU, as long as this step is being taken by a minority, because it would offer the trade union bureaucracy the excuse they are looking for to split the trade unions ... For reasons of principle, a split in the trade union movement must be avoided, if at all possible' ('Der dritte Weltkongress und die Gewerkschaftsfrage', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 252, 6 June 1921). In practice, however, the delegates of the communist minorities in the German trade unions were given full voting rights at the founding congress of the RILU, as if they represented member organisations in a regular fashion.

305 See Wentzel, p. 107.

306 There are summaries of these events in Potthoff 1979, pp. 368–71, and Laubscher 1979, pp. 211–14. Heinrich Brandler and Fritz Heckert stood at the head of the expelled building workers. Both of them were already leading personalities in the KPD, and later on they would occasionally play an important part in the RILU. However, it should be stressed that only in some instances did matters come to a head specifically over the question of 'Moscow or Amsterdam'. Often the occasion for expulsion was provided by concrete trade-union matters.

In spite of the expulsions, and other measures by the trade-union leaders such as changes in the mode of election to trade-union assemblies,³⁰⁷ the communist opposition was able to gain a firm foothold in the unions. After it had failed in its attempt early in 1921 to persuade the ADGB unions to join the Moscow trade-union international, it concentrated on fractional activity within them, achieving a considerable degree of success in the next few months. Communism was a firmly rooted opposition movement enjoying mass influence, and it was therefore impossible simply to drive it out of the unions, although disciplinary measures were repeatedly taken against individuals, since to do so would have produced a split throughout the whole of the trade-union organisation. The communist fraction in the German trade unions was able to participate in the Moscow trade-union congress, but only as 'the revolutionary minority in the ADGB'. Despite continuing to introduce disciplinary measures against individuals or small groups of communists, the German trade-union leaders finally accepted the existence of this revolutionary minority, while, on the other side of the fence, the KPD continued to uphold the principle of working within trade unions led by Social Democrats.

Moscow's challenge had thus led to different results in the three main member organisations of the IFTU. In France, it acted as the catalyst for a trend towards division which had already received its first impulse from the turn of the CGT Majority towards reformism since 1914 under Jouhaux. But the minority of French trade unionists who looked towards Moscow were imbued with the ideas of revolutionary syndicalism and stood at best in a loose, and indeed often critical, relationship to the pro-communist tendency in the socialist party. In Italy, the leadership of the CGL had, it is true, formally given its allegiance to the ITUC. Yet it became increasingly clear that this had been done for tactical reasons connected with the development of the various currents within the socialist party, and therefore that the CGL could hardly be relied on in the long run, in the way that Moscow could rely on the newly founded communist party, which only a minority of Italian socialists had joined, however. In Germany, finally, the ITUC could build on a mass communist party, which formed a fraction within the ADGB, the national trade-union centre. The forces that responded to the invitation to an international trade-union congress in Moscow were therefore very diverse. But there was no ambiguity about the big dividing-line

307 Cf. on this the data in Potthoff 1979, p. 372. He comments as follows: 'Different kinds of system for electing to positions on the executive played a role which should not be underestimated in relation to the formation of fractions within the trade unions. The debates on the voting system were predominantly high-minded, but the decisions, on the other hand, were dictated by self-interest'.

between the supporters of Amsterdam and Moscow which now passed through the member organisations of the IFTU. Here we have only examined developments in the three above-mentioned national trade-union centres, because it was there that the confrontation was particularly intense. One reason for this intensity was that a decision by these weightier sections was bound to exert an influence on developments among the smaller member organisations of the IFTU.³⁰⁸ The confrontation between Amsterdam and Moscow affected the whole of the IFTU (which essentially covered the whole of the European trade-union movement), as is shown by the series of resolutions published by the IFTU's new organ, which began publication at the beginning of 1921, under the heading 'The Trade Unions Against Moscow'.³⁰⁹ The ITUC, for its part, was also able to publish numerous resolutions from different parts of the world in favour of Moscow in the report of its activities over the past year, dated July 1921.³¹⁰ While the resolutions published in the IFTU organ came by and large from trade-union congresses or executives of national or international trade-union centres (see section 9 of this chapter for the resolutions issued by the International Trade Secretariats), the resolutions in favour of Moscow came above all from lower-level trade-union sections: from local branches, regional associations and individual craft groups with a fighting tradition. This expressed the fact that the fissure hardly ran at all through the union leaderships, which in practice stood solidly behind Amsterdam. The basis for Moscow's support lay

308 The TUC, which was by far the most important member of the IFTU, represented a special case. The communist party established in Britain in the summer of 1920 was merely a merger between a number of small socialist groups peripheral to the Labour Party. Its trade-union influence was marginal, even though the Shop Stewards' Movement and some left-wing trade unionists, such as Purcell and Williams, had been involved in founding the party. After Murphy's return at the end of 1920, the British Bureau of the ITUC (later the RILU) emerged from this group. It engaged actively in propaganda (cf. section 7 of this chapter) and succeeded in pushing through appropriately pro-Moscow resolutions in a number of trade unions. But the Bureau was only able to win limited agreement to its views, and it proved to be a marginal phenomenon in the British trade-union movement, which in any case had little interest in international matters. Confrontation over the issue 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' therefore led neither to any kind of movement towards splitting the TUC nor to expulsions of supporters of Moscow from the trade unions. (For developments in Sweden, see K. Kilbom, 'Der Kampf zwischen Amsterdam und Moskau in der schwedischen Gewerkschaftsbewegung', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 18, 1921, pp. 167–74).

309 'Die Gewerkschaften gegen Moskau', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, nos. 2–3, March–May 1921, pp. 4–11; and no. 5, October 1921, pp. 135–41.

310 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 78–108.

rather in a section of the trade-union base which had been radicalised by war-time and postwar experience, and was unable to find adequate expression in the central leadership bodies owing to the hierarchical way in which the trade unions were structured.

In organisational terms, therefore, the current favouring Moscow was a minority within the IFTU. With the syndicalists, however, the starting-point was different. These people were committed to revolutionary principles and opposed to 'Amsterdam' from the outset. There was great sympathy for the Russian Revolution among the syndicalists, even though they were strongly critical of the concrete basis on which the ITUC had been set up. This critical attitude had induced a number of representatives of syndicalism to refuse to sign the resolution by which it was founded. The compromise worked out subsequently still needed to be discussed in the syndicalist organisations themselves.

6 The Syndicalists En Route for Moscow

When the syndicalists met in Moscow in summer 1920, this was their first international discussion since the London Congress of 1913, even though it took place unintentionally and in a completely informal way. The delegates of the different syndicalist organisations met in Pestaña's room³¹¹ in the hotel assigned to them, and they discussed what attitude they ought to take up towards the proposals of the Bolsheviks. The latter made intensive efforts to gain their approval, and not just within the framework provided by the congress of the Comintern and the trade-union discussion. Visits to see Lenin were almost obligatory by now, and he himself sought close contact with the syndicalists.³¹² The immense effort the Bolsheviks were making was clear, but their objectives were equally clear: 'As eager as the Bolsheviks were to secure the support of all revolutionary groups, particularly that of the syndicalists, they nevertheless' insisted 'that the desired collaboration be on Bolshevik terms'.³¹³ But eventually only one part of the syndicalist movement was ready to go along with this.

311 According to Borghi, in an article reprinted in Antonioli 1990, pp. 305–9, here p. 307.

312 These discussions with Lenin have been described by several participants, for example Pestaña 1924, pp. 191–8; Borghi in his report to the USI on his trip to Russia, reprinted in Antonioli 1990, pp. 311–19; and Souchy 1985, pp. 41–4 (Souchy visited Lenin together with Paul Freeman). Some indications are also given by Souchy's contemporary articles, referred to in footnote 316.

313 Thorpe 1989, p. 139.

The person the syndicalist visitors to Russia were most interested in seeing, particularly those syndicalists with an anarchist background, was Kropotkin, since, despite the position he had taken up after 1914, they could in essence identify themselves with his political opinions.³¹⁴ In addition to Kropotkin, the organised Russian anarcho-syndicalists around Shapiro, the former anarchist Victor Serge (now a party member) and the Russian-American anarchists Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman (who would continue their attempt to keep on good terms with the Bolsheviks until 1921) all played an important role in providing the syndicalists with contacts and informing them about the Russian situation.³¹⁵

For the syndicalists of the West, therefore, the summer of 1920 was not only a period of ideological confrontation with the Bolsheviks over theoretical and strategic questions. It was also the time when they made their acquaintance with the realities of the Russian Revolution and with a Marxist attempt to establish socialism, an attempt they were bound to view with critical eyes.

As a result, they composed a number of reports which emphasise the revolutionary heroism of the Russian workers and peasants, but also paint an unvarnished picture of the authoritarian features of the new system of Bolshevik domination. They openly expressed their disappointment that Bolshevik practice was far removed from syndicalist conceptions.

But not all these reports reached the readers they were aimed at in good time to influence the formation of opinion at home. Souchy at least was able to make his report shortly after his return in October both at public meetings and in a series of articles in the organ of the FAUD, and he soon published his account in more detail in a book.³¹⁶ Pestaña and Borghi, on the other hand, were less fortunate. Both were arrested after their return to their home country,

314 Pestaña 1924, pp. 181–8; Borghi, in Antonioli 1990, pp. 305–11; and Souchy 1985, pp. 46–9.

315 Pestaña, Borghi and Souchy all provided information about these meetings in their reports. In addition, Serge and Goldman recorded them in their memoirs (Serge 1963, pp. 104 and 106; and Goldman 1931, vol. 2, pp. 799–800). Serge's activities as a mediator made him the target of criticism, since his private utterances were far more critical than his public statements. Even his earlier association with the Bonnot Gang was brought up against him. (Cf. 'Les opinions privées de Kibaltchiche', *Le Libertaire*, 4–11 February 1921, and Rhillon, 'Un "Révolutionnaire vertueux"', *Le Libertaire*, 28 October–4 November 1921). There would be a veritable campaign against him in anarchist circles after the delegates returned home from the founding congress of the RILU.

316 'Eindrücke aus Sowjet-Russland nach einem Vortrag des Gen. A. Souchy in der Berliner Arbeiterbörse am 15. November 1920', *Der Syndikalist*, nos. 48–51/52, 1920, and Souchy 1921.

and they spent a long time in prison, so that they could only publish the record of their experiences one or two years afterwards.³¹⁷ It will later be shown that in the case of their respective organisations, the CNT and the USI, which were in any case the most significant independent syndicalist trade unions, this belatedness meant that there was no controversy over their participation in the international trade-union congress in Moscow, which was the founding congress of the RILU. On the contrary, the decision to participate was widely supported.

There were also reports from 'unofficial' syndicalist representatives, people who had travelled to Russia without a mandate from any organisation. This applies above all to the French syndicalists Vergeat, Lepetit and 'Wilkins'. They composed reports which reached the French left through the anarchist paper *Le Libertaire*, rather than through the syndicalist and emphatically pro-Bolshevik *La Vie ouvrière*. The building worker Bertho Lepetit and the metal-worker Marcel Vergeat were long-standing revolutionary syndicalists; they too travelled to Russia in the summer of 1920. As Wayne Thorpe has pointed out, they 'preferred to spend their time investigating conditions of life in Russia at first hand rather than attending formal meetings'.³¹⁸ They had accordingly

317 Pestaña arrived in Berlin from Russia in mid-October 1920, and he had extensive discussions with the FAUD leaders. He then travelled on to Milan, in Italy, where he was arrested and, after two months, deported back to Spain. He arrived in Barcelona in the middle of December, and he was immediately re-arrested. He then sat in prison throughout 1921, and that was where he wrote his report (Meaker 1974, pp. 298–9). In addition to the *Memoria*, which we have frequently referred to, and which he described as having been written in 'Barcelona y cárcel' in 'Noviembre de 1921' (Pestaña *Memoria*, Madrid, 1922 [again Pestaña 1922a?], p. 87), and which first came out in 1922, he also published *Consideraciones* in the same year (Pestaña, *Consideraciones*, Barcelona, 1922). This was a more analytical text, in which he was concerned to engage in a theoretical discussion over the foundations of the Bolshevik Revolution. Two years later, he produced two considerably expanded and revised books on the same subject: *Setenta días en Rusia. Lo que yo vi*, and *Setenta días en Rusia. Lo que yo pienso*, both published in Barcelona in 1924. The first book is a new version of his earlier report on his travels in Russia, but this time his experiences of daily life in the revolution occupy the foreground, and his records of the political meetings he took part in are left out. The second book is the analytical text. Borghi, who also travelled via Berlin, arriving in Italy as early as the middle of September, spent the period between October 1920 and July 1921 in prison. (Cf. Antonioli 1990, pp. 97, 105 and 110). He did not publish a detailed memorandum of the kind issued by Pestaña, but he did make a report to the USI, which was printed in its newspaper in October 1921, and he also discussed the episode decades later in his memoirs.

318 Thorpe 1989, p. 148.

refused to take part in the Second Comintern Congress as delegates (they attended a number of its sessions but only informally), and they appear not to have belonged to the group which founded the ITUC. They sent a number of letters, which were not published in France until the end of 1920, in which they painted a rather critical picture, stressing the enormous efforts of the Russian communists, but also pointing out that it was 'precisely the workers themselves' who were 'often excluded from decision-making in what was professedly a workers' revolution'.³¹⁹

At the beginning of October, both Lepetit and Vergeat perished on the return journey to France, along with a third man, also French. They had chosen what they assumed was a safer and quicker route home through Murmansk and Norway, instead of travelling through Poland and the Baltic. The ship they were sailing on presumably foundered during one of the harsh storms of autumn. Later on, their disappearance gave rise to rumours that they had been victims of Bolshevik repression. But in spite of their critical attitude to Bolshevism, which became known in later months, and which in any case went hand in hand with a defence of the revolution against its external enemies, a detailed analysis of all the available information about their death gives no reason to justify any such assumption.³²⁰

A series of articles published by 'Wilkins' in *Le Libéraire* after his return at the beginning of 1921 made a greater impact. 'Wilkins' was the pseudonym of a refugee from Spain, whose real name was probably Galán. He too had shown little interest in the political meetings in Moscow. Instead, he spent half a year travelling through the Soviet republic. He also spent over a month in prison there. Originally an enthusiastic supporter of the Bolsheviks, he now returned to the West as a convinced anarchist opponent of their régime, and in each

319 Ibid.

320 Cf. the thorough discussion in Kriegel 1964, vol. 2, pp. 767–87, and notes 63 and 65 in Thorpe 1989, p. 299. See also the obituary written by Rosmer, 'En souvenir de Lepetit, Vergeat, Raymond Lefebvre', *Mouvement ouvrier international*, no. 2, February 1921, pp. 21–2, and the remarks of Serge, in Serge 1963, p. 112. The route via Murmansk and the North Cape was by no means unusual at this time. Its use resulted from the situation created by the allied blockade of Soviet Russia and the attitude of Poland. There are several other examples of journeys made via Murmansk. The Russian trade-union delegation used the route in summer 1920 (cf. section 4 of this chapter); the leader of the Scottish Shop Stewards' Movement, Willie Gallacher, travelled to and from the Second Comintern Congress in this way and later gave an evocative account of his experiences (*The Rolling of the Thunder*, London, 1947, pp. 7 and 18–20); Franz Jung, too, who was then a KAPD functionary, took this route, and described it in his memoirs (Jung 1991, p. 167).

number for almost six months he published negative evaluations of them in the leading organ of French anarchism.³²¹

All these pieces of information only emerged slowly and were too late to influence any immediate political decisions. Discussions about the syndicalists' reports were to last for many months. But the syndicalists had to decide quickly, in view of the fact that the international trade-union congress in Moscow had been called for the following year. As Rudolf Rocker wrote in his memoirs: 'It was clear to most people that their own national organisations would have to agree first if attendance at the Moscow congress was to have any meaning ... Thus an international conference was called in a great hurry to Berlin (it was also described as a preliminary conference to prepare a later, more representative conference). It met in December 1920'.³²²

The Berlin conference to which Rocker refers took place between 16–21 December.³²³ At the conference, the United States were represented by George Hardy of the IWW, Argentina by Tom Barker of the FORA-Comunista, France by Victor Godonnèche and Jean Ceppe of the CSR, the Netherlands by B. Lansink Jr. and E. Bouwman of the NAS, Germany by a delegation of six from the FAUD, including Rocker and Souchy, which had also received a mandate from the Czechoslovak syndicalists, and Sweden by Frans Severin of the SAC. Jack Tanner

321 See the data in Thorpe 1989, pp. 177–8, on 'Wilkens' and his somewhat mysterious existence. *V.I. Lenin. Biograficheskaya Khronika*, vol. 9, p. 252, mentions a meeting between Galán-Wilkens and Lenin on 8 September 1920, and also a letter from the former, sent from prison, to Lenin, who added the following marginal note for his secretariat: 'Ask the Cheka about this' (p. 456).

322 Rocker 1974, p. 308.

323 No official record of the proceedings of this conference was made. A committee was elected at the conference to construct a report (which was published as *Bericht über die Internationale Syndikalistische Konferenz*, Amsterdam, 1921, and also in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 8, 1921), but this contains only resolutions and personal statements by the delegates. In view of this, the presentation of the conference given here is derived from the following articles by participants: A. Souchy, 'Bericht über die internationale syndikalistische Vorkonferenz', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 51/52, 1920; F. Severin, 'The International Union Conference', *Solidarity*, nos. 121, 26 February 1921 to 125, 26 March 1921 (according to a statement in no. 121 of this journal, an official report on the conference also existed, by Hardy, but it was only published in *Industrial Worker*, the organ of the West coast IWW, which we have been unable to examine); V. Godonnèche, 'Les localistes convoquent une conférence internationale', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 89, 14 January 1921; E. Bouwman, 'From Berlin to Moscow', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 3, April 1921, p. 39 (this article was republished several times, including in the organ of the ITUC [*Mezhdunarodnoye rabochee dvizhenie*, no. 4, April 1921, pp. 33–5]). See also the account of the conference in Thorpe 1989, pp. 150–60.

arrived on the last day as the delegate of the British Shop Stewards. These representatives of syndicalist organisations claimed to speak for a total of one million workers. The VTsSPS was also represented by a guest delegation headed by S. Belen'ky.³²⁴

There were also absentees, of course: the Danish and Norwegian syndicalists could only send a declaration of sympathy. But the most important absentees were the two most influential European syndicalist organisations, the CNT and the USI. They both had to inform the conference that owing to the repression in their countries, they were not in a position to send any delegates. Each of them had at least as many members as the whole of the organisations represented at the conference. Their presence would, moreover, have had political consequences. If, for example, Borghi or Pestaña had come, the conference would have taken up a much more critical attitude towards the planned congress in Moscow. The only delegate at the Berlin conference who had also been in Moscow was Souchy.

The latter also presided over the conference during the first few days. After the presentation of extensive reports giving information on the situation in specific countries, centred mainly on the wave of persecution of the syndicalist organisations, the delegates then moved towards discussing the attitude they should take up towards the trade-union congress which had been called to meet in Moscow. The view of the German representatives was that first of all they needed to establish what their own programmatic requirements actually were. As one of them (Winkler) declared, 'we must first be clear about what the revolutionary syndicalists want to achieve in Moscow, and we must therefore first create a basis on which it will then be possible to go to Moscow'.³²⁵ He pointed to the declaration issued by the London Congress of 1913 as a model for the kind of clarification that was needed.

For Hardy of the IWW, on the other hand, the question of whether or not to go to Moscow had already been decided. The delegates at this conference were, it

324 It has not been possible to find any definite information on the identity of Belen'ky (also sometimes written Belinsky; the form of the name as written here follows the version in the Russian version of Bouwman's article mentioned in note 12). According to information in *Die Rote Fahne* (see above, section 5, note 288), he was the chairman of the Russian chemical workers' union and also participated in discussions with a number of International Trade Secretariats in Amsterdam. The person in question was probably a certain Z.M. Belen'ky, who was elected at the end of 1926 to the presidium of the VTsSPS by the seventh Russian congress of trade unions, but not re-elected in 1928 by the eighth congress.

325 *Der Syndikalist*, no. 51/52, 1920.

is true, strictly opposed to the political domination of a party, and they rejected the tactic of setting up communist cells in the reformist trade unions, he said. 'But they do not want to fight against Moscow. They want to have one single economic international, not two. They want an international together with Moscow'.³²⁶ The French delegates also underlined that they had already affiliated with Moscow. The CSRs, they said, combined together different currents, from anarchist to communist, but they were all united in looking to Moscow.³²⁷ They also justified their support for the Moscow congress by referring to statements by Zinoviev, to the effect that the issue at stake for the trade unions was not the acceptance of the Twenty-One Conditions of admission to the Comintern, but quite simply the recognition of the revolutionary class struggle.

The Russian representatives at the conference also stressed this point, stating that everything depended on the answer to the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' Anyone who proclaims his opposition to participation in the Moscow trade-union congress is giving support to Amsterdam, they said. In any case, the ITUC was not subordinate to the Comintern, even though it was associated with that institution by sharing a common objective. Tom Barker came to the conclusion that despite fundamental differences of view, he stood closer to Moscow than Amsterdam. While the Swedish representative made it known that he was in agreement with the Germans, it was clear from the comments of the two Dutch representatives that they tended in opposite directions.

Thus while all the participants solemnly affirmed what they had in common as revolutionary syndicalists, it was already possible to see clear differences in their attitude to Moscow. Indeed, the further course of the conference brought it to the verge of a split. There had already been a disturbance at the beginning of the conference when a German delegate brought up the fate of the Russian syndicalists. He had heard about arrests, but when Belen'ky made a sharp protest against his comments, he was unable to give precise details in reply.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ The two French delegates, however, only represented the group around *La Vie Ouvrière*, which was oriented towards co-operation with the Bolsheviks. In a bulletin issued shortly before the next conference of French syndicalists in June 1922, the following comment appears: 'Subsequently, in separate meetings of the minority syndicalists at the Lille Congress of 1921, Monatte made a declaration to A. Souchy, the representative of the German syndicalists, that he had sent Godonnèche and Ceppe to Berlin to the preliminary conference in Berlin for the purpose of preventing the establishment of a syndicalist international by using all the strength they possessed' ('Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale und die deutschen Syndikalist', *Internationales Bulletin der revolutionären Syndikalistinnen und Industrialisten*, no. 1, 16 June 1922).

Another Soviet representative, who did not arrive until the second day of the conference, made a direct verbal attack on Souchy. In Moscow, she said, quoting the minutes of the meeting in question,³²⁸ he had declared his adherence to the ITUC; now he wanted to go back on this. Her reproach sparked off an angry reaction. Souchy declared that what was at issue had never been an official affiliation of the FAUD to the ITUC, because he had no mandate to announce that, but only his own personal participation, and Lozovsky too had understood his comments in that sense. Another member of the FAUD's Organising Committee added that they had sent a letter to Moscow clearly pointing out that the FAUD had not joined the ITUC. The Russian delegation then declared:

We regard as a provocation the two-faced policy of Mr. Souchi-Sturm, expressed in the fact that on the one hand he entered the Moscow trade union international as a representative of the German syndicalists and enjoyed the rights of a member of the international, and on the other hand, while still not declaring his withdrawal from the international, carried on a vile press campaign against the Moscow trade union international and against Soviet Russia. We therefore propose to the German syndicalists that they draw a line between themselves and the activities of Mr. Souchi-Sturm, and cease to regard him as a member of their delegation. If they do not do this, we shall regard the German syndicalist organisation as wholly responsible for Souchi's actions. At the same time, we hereby give notice that these facts will be brought before the broad mass of the proletariat in the press.³²⁹

Souchy thereupon announced his resignation as chairman of the conference, and he was replaced by Lansink. Despite this, a number of delegates reverted back to the attacks on him or the rejoinders to them. There was a mutual escalation of recriminations which culminated in a tumult. As Severin wrote: "Then the storm broke out. Everyone attempted to speak at the same time, while the chairman endeavoured to call the delegates to order by ringing the bell. The usual form of address, which was "Comrade", was replaced by sobriquets such as "Provocateur", "Liar" and so on."³³⁰

³²⁸ On this, see below in more detail.

³²⁹ The Russian delegation's statement is reproduced in a commentary on the course of the conference by Belen'ky himself (see S.B. 'Die Konvulsionen des Syndikalismus', *Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 1, 15 January 1921).

³³⁰ *Solidarity*, no. 122, 5 March 1921. He added: 'The readers of this newspaper must forgive their correspondent for his inability to give a full account of the course of this

After the midday break, the delegates continued to abuse each other, and the conference seemed to be about to break up, when the Germans and the solitary Swede rose from their seats to make a demonstrative exit. It needed a powerful intervention by Hardy, who protested that he had travelled thousands of miles to attend and could not possibly return home to report on a conference which ended in this way. It would mean a complete loss of confidence by the American workers in the Europeans. In this way he succeeded in bringing the conference back to its proper agenda. After a long discussion on the principles that underlay revolutionary syndicalism, they finally agreed to set up a drafting committee. This would summarise for the conference the essential positions on the basis of which the syndicalists were prepared to go to Moscow. The only objection came from Belen'ky, who as a guest had no voting rights. The differences between the organisations represented were too big, he said. Each one should be allowed to present its own standpoint in Moscow. To set up this committee would amount to preparing for a separate syndicalist international.

On the last day of the conference – in the meantime, Tanner, the representative of the Shop Stewards' Movement, had appeared, while the French had gone, leaving behind a declaration in which they affirmed the necessary unity of all revolutionary trade unionists and called on all the syndicalists at the conference, even opponents of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to take part in the Moscow congress – the drafting committee, which consisted of Hardy, Lansink and Theodor Plivier, who was later to gain fame as a novelist [under the name Theodor Plievier], presented a resolution which formulated the essential principles of syndicalism in six points: one, the basis of action was revolutionary class struggle; two, the goal was libertarian communism; three, 'economic organisations' should be set up; four, they should direct production; five, they should be independent of all political parties; and six, they should co-operate in concrete actions, provided they agreed on their goal.

It was again Belen'ky who demanded changes in two of the points, thereby provoking lengthy discussions. On the one hand, he demanded the inclusion of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' as a basis. This provoked fierce disagreement. Rocker and Severin in particular emphasised that syndicalism rejected the state on principle, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was in principle nothing but a variant of the state. This had nothing to do with the fact that the proletariat naturally had to engage in armed struggle against the bourgeoisie if

tumult'. Souchy, in his own report, commented on the events in a restrained and rather refined manner: 'The harmony of the conference was disturbed for half a day by the behaviour of the Russians. After that, though, the proceedings again took a smooth course' (*Der Syndikalist*, no. 51/52, 1920).

necessary. Tanner, on the other hand, said that the Shop Stewards had declared in favour of the dictatorship, understanding it not as the rule of a party, but as the rule of the whole working class, represented by its economic organisations. Barker and Hardy also indicated their sympathy for this point of view, though somewhat less clearly. But when Severin proposed as a compromise formula 'the rule ("domination") of the working class', they supported him in this, while Tanner voted against the compromise, referring in justification to the position already taken by the Shop Stewards, who had voted for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A similar conflict broke out over the question of their relationship to political parties. Belen'sky had called for co-operation with the Comintern. Once again, only Tanner declared his complete agreement. The conference finally agreed on a compromise formula, which stressed that co-operation between the revolutionary trade unions and the party would operate in both directions

In contrast to this, the other points of the common platform, among them an appeal to all revolutionary syndicalists to go to Moscow, were adopted unanimously. One or two other organisational decisions of the conference confirmed the sense of a common purpose. If members of a syndicalist organisation went to another country, in which a comparable organisation existed, they were to be accepted as members with equal rights. An international syndicalist information bureau was established, consisting of Tanner, Rocker and Lansink, with its headquarters in Amsterdam. Its task was to get in touch with organisations which had not been present at the conference, as well as with the ITUC.

If the German and Swedish syndicalists had actually had the aim of creating a separate syndicalist international in declared opposition to Moscow, which they were repeatedly accused of wanting to do during the conference,³³¹ they had failed, owing to the attitude of the majority of the participants. Despite all the admitted differences between them, the majority had plainly declared their intention of going to the Moscow congress and arriving at an agreement with the communists there. Even the FAUD had not – as yet – opposed this. As it turned out, it was necessary first to go through the experience of the RILU founding congress before sufficient support was forthcoming for the plan to set up an independent syndicalist international.

The Berlin conference had at least produced a common political basis for syndicalism which went beyond the platform of the London Congress of 1913.

331 An intention of this kind was implied in the letter of invitation sent by the FAUD Organising Committee to this conference, as printed for example in *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 11, November 1920, p. 12. The letter refers in particular to the need to draw a line of demarcation separating them from the Comintern and from 'the power of the party'.

The discussion had admittedly revealed lines of fracture which were soon to become more serious when a decision had to be made over whether to join the RILU. The Germans and Swedes, on the one hand, had reverted to the classical theses of anarchism in drawing a line of demarcation that separated them from Bolshevism. This implied their support for the amalgamation of anarchism with syndicalism which produced anarcho-syndicalism. Hardy, on the other hand, speaking for the IWW, had clearly announced that the people he represented were centralists, and this distinguished them from the FAUD.

Leaving aside the fact that the composition of the conference was governed to some extent by accidental factors, it was evident that the syndicalist spectrum assembled together in Berlin was marked by its heterogeneity. What the conference was able to deliver as a consensus was the least common denominator. Moreover, even this could be interpreted in different ways, as for example in the case of the compromise formula on the 'rule [*Herrschaft*] of the working class'. It was clear that each organisation would have to make the actual decision on its attitude to Moscow separately. Belen'ky had already indicated that the Bolsheviks too were aware of this.

The conference also had a journalistic aftermath. Belen'ky wrote an angry commentary on it, which appeared in the organ of the Berlin bureau of the ITUC. In his article, he sharply attacked the FAUD and the Swedes, contrasting them with the 'left wing', made up of the French, who had unfortunately left the conference too early, and Hardy: 'The [Berlin] conference illustrated the collapse of the old syndicalism. It was valuable for that reason. All that is healthy, all that is revolutionary, in this organisation, is striving irresistibly towards the healthy centre to which the future belongs, the Moscow trade union international'.³³² The FAUD organ, *Der Syndikalist*, replied just as sharply. The attacks on Souchy, it said, were slanders. They were a failed attempt to play off the syndicalist organisations against each other. This had been prevented by the establishment of a common platform which would allow them to negotiate with Moscow collectively. In addition, the writer of the article could confirm that the FAUD now had documentary proof of the persecution of Russian anarchists and syndicalists by the Bolsheviks and it would publish this very soon. This was an allusion to a visit by 'Wilken', who had stopped off in Berlin on his return journey from Moscow to France, and informed the FAUD about his experiences in Russia.³³³

332 S.B. 'Die Konvulsionen des Syndikalismus!', *Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 1, 15 January 1921.

333 F.B. 'Die Konvulsionen des Syndikalismus oder Die Konfusionen des Herrn Belinki', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 5, 1921.

In any case, it turned out to be impossible within the next few months to create a unified syndicalist grouping in advance of the Moscow congress by making use of the Amsterdam Information Bureau. This body seems to have left behind few traces of its existence, at least up to the founding congress of the RILU. According to Thorpe, the syndicalist Information Bureau 'sought to communicate with the RILU Provisional Council' but 'found itself ignored'.³³⁴ But he gives no source for this statement. Moreover, no letter from this bureau was presented to any meeting of the ITUC.³³⁵ Only questions from national syndicalist organisations were treated there, because it was in the national organisations that the actual decisions on the Moscow trade-union congress would be made. This situation opened more favourable prospects for the Bolsheviks, allowing them to pursue a policy of 'divide and rule'. They therefore preferred it.³³⁶ There was a disadvantage to this way of dealing with international questions, however: it was liable to give rise to problems deriving from the specific national circumstances prevailing in each case.

The IWW, for example, was confronted on the one hand with the leadership claims of the American communists, which were raised in the form of ultimata. The following demands, made as conditions for 'co-operation', were typical of this: the IWW must abandon the view that the revolution can occur through 'industrial organisation', and it must instead carry out propaganda for the revolutionary overthrow of the government and its replacement by Soviets and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Leading positions in the IWW must only be open to members who also belong to the communist party. The IWW leadership reacted by resolving that it was impossible to co-operate with the party on that basis.³³⁷ A commentary in the IWW journal referred dismissively to 'Soviet maniacs ... shameless adventurers, cunning politicians and *agents provocateurs*'.³³⁸ Nevertheless, an informal meeting did take place between the IWW, represented by George Hardy and Ralph Chaplin, and the American communists. It was held before Hardy's departure for Berlin, probably in November, therefore, and was apparently fruitless.³³⁹

334 Thorpe 1989, p. 161.

335 The minutes of the ITUC are a proof of this (RGASPI 534/3/2).

336 Thorpe 1989, p. 161. Franz Barwich, a member of the FAUD's Organising Committee, had already warned against this approach, when commenting on Belen'ky's article (F.B. 'Die Konvulsionen des Syndikalismus oder Die Konfusionen des Herrn Belinki', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 5, 1921).

337 'Special meeting of the General Executive Board', *Solidarity*, no. 34 (104), 30 October 1920.

338 *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 11 (21), November 1920, pp. 17–18.

339 Hardy, p. 131. It was the United Communist Party which raised this claim to leadership. But

On the other hand, in August 1920 the IWW finally became acquainted with the text of the long letter, already written in January, in which the Comintern, while declaring its solidarity with the revolutionary combativeness of the Wobblies, also pointed out its theoretical and strategic disagreements with them.³⁴⁰ The IWW's first reaction was moderate. The journal *Solidarity* invited the membership to take part in a broad discussion, and noted, in its first commentary, that the 'somewhat hysterical tone' of the Comintern's letter was undoubtedly a result of the situation Soviet Russia was in at the beginning of the year. The position in the country was now much more settled and one would be able to have a more sensible discussion. The article expressed its gratitude for the way the Communist International 'had held out the hand of brotherhood to the IWW'.³⁴¹ But there was one thing it was not possible to ignore: the resolutions of the Second Comintern Congress had made it clear that the Third International would be 'political' through and through, and it would in no sense represent a kind of intermediate stage towards an 'economic' international.

The General Executive Board of the IWW accordingly once again raised the question of whether it should belong to the Comintern. At the end of August, it voted to hold a referendum among the members of the IWW. Three possible positions were suggested: (1) give support to the Comintern; (2) do not give official support but inform the Comintern that the IWW wanted an 'economic and industrial international'; (3) give support to the Comintern while reserving the right not to take part in parliamentary activities and the right to develop our own tactics. The General Executive Board voted to reject the first position but to accept the second and third positions.³⁴²

This decision opened the way to a discussion among the wider membership, which was conducted with the utmost passion and accompanied by fierce verbal attacks by members on each other in the next few months while the referendum was being held. The communists assiduously attempted to influence the result. The IWW publications issued during this period are full of contributions to the discussion, and they provide some insight into the nature of the

the attitude of the second communist party, which continued to exist until the two were unified in 1921, was not substantially different. (Cf. 'The Yellow Leaders of the I.W.W.', *The Communist*, no. 15, 15 December 1920). This article did however 'concede' that the basis of the IWW, as opposed to that of the Socialist Party, was revolutionary. It therefore called for the formation of communist cells within the former organisation.

340 Cf. chapter 2, section 3.

341 'The I.W.W. and the Third International', *Solidarity*, no. 23, 14 August 1920.

342 'The General Executive Board of the I.W.W. Acts promptly in Response to the "Appeal of the Third International"', *Solidarity*, no. 29 (95), 28 August 1920.

disagreements. The West coast organ of the IWW was particularly critical of the Comintern, and roundly rejected 'political membership'. As Gambbs wrote later: 'The Western publication of the I.W.W., the Seattle *Industrial Worker*, seemed during this period to belong to a different organisation'.³⁴³

But when an internal organisational conflict was superimposed on the discussion it took on an extra dimension. The very influential Philadelphia local of the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union, a part of the IWW, came under suspicion in summer 1920 of having facilitated the loading of ships with weapons for Wrangel's White Guards. This gave the communists the opportunity to make a fierce attack on the IWW leadership for permitting its members to engage in counter-revolutionary activity.³⁴⁴ The conflict then began to go deeper, so that it became a generalised battle over questions of trade-union strategy and structure. The trade union in question had taken root very successfully in its branch of activity, but in doing so it had gone against certain principles which the IWW stood for, and which marked it out from the AFL.³⁴⁵

The GEB was thus placed under a great deal of pressure. The Philadelphia local was repeatedly suspended, and each time the suspension was raised.³⁴⁶ Finally the GEB resorted to disciplinary measures in order to 'keep control over' the discussion on the Comintern.³⁴⁷ In the middle of October, the chief editor

343 Gambbs 1932, p. 80. On the arguments used by the IWW, see also the commentary by the communist party leader James Cannon published at the end of December under the title 'Another Renegade', and reprinted in Cannon 1992, pp. 75–7. Cannon had himself been an important activist of the IWW before the First World War. He joined the Socialist Party during the war, and then in 1919 became a member of the Communist Party.

344 Cf. the article published by Cannon at the end of August 1920, 'The IWW at Philadelphia', reprinted in Cannon 1992, pp. 71–4.

345 The issue here was the high level of admission fees typical of the 'craft unions' in the AFL, which were intended to guarantee the 'closed shop', and were fiercely contested by the IWW. The longshoremen of the MTWIU represented an exception in the history of the IWW in many respects, firstly because they were a stable trade-union organisation in the industrial region of the East coast, where the IWW had never been able to gain a proper foothold despite initial successes, and secondly because unlike the AFL trade unions, they were racially integrated. (For the background to this, see McGirr 1995 and Kimeldorf and Penney 1997).

346 On this point, see *Solidarity*, no. 29 (100), 2 October 1920, and no. 32 (102), 16 October 1920, and the report in *Solidarity*, no. 133, 21 May 1921 on the 13th IWW Convention, held in May 1921.

347 For the heated atmosphere in the IWW at this time, and the fear that the discussion could culminate in a split like the one that took place in 1908 with the supporters of DeLeon, see the 'October Bulletin' of the GEB, in *Solidarity*, no. 33 (103), 32 October 1920.

of the central IWW organ, *Solidarity*, was removed owing to his pro-communist sympathies, and then in December the chief editor of the monthly journal, *One Big Union Monthly*, was also removed, in this case for opposite reasons. The latter publication was then continued under the changed name of *Industrial Pioneer*.³⁴⁸

After the referendum itself had been questioned by some people in the ranks of the IWW as being against the union's statutes, an accusation the IWW leadership of course strongly denied,³⁴⁹ the result finally became available in mid-December. Unconditional support for the Comintern was clearly rejected, with 602 votes in favour and 1,658 against, but the two conditional formulations were more successful. Variant number 2 – no official support but a declaration that they favoured an 'industrial international' – received 913 votes in favour and 1,113 votes against. The third variant – conditional support, but rejection of parliamentary activities and insistence on the IWW's right to develop its own national tactics – received 1,111 votes in favour and 994 against. Here, however, the GEB had recourse to a trick. To the 994 votes against the third motion it added 127 extra *no* votes, which was, it alleged, the number of members who had voted against all three options.³⁵⁰ There is admittedly some question as to how representative the votes of the 2,000 participants in the referendum were, given that at the same time the IWW claimed at the Berlin conference to have over 100,000 members.³⁵¹ Nevertheless, in formal terms the IWW had drawn a dividing line between itself and the Comintern. 'In keeping with its traditional policy, the I.W.W. had refused to ally itself with "politics"'.³⁵²

348 'Special Meeting of the General Executive Board', *Solidarity*, no. 34 (104), 30 October 1920, and 'G.E.B. Bulletin', *Solidarity*, no. 41 (111), 18 December 1920. Cf. also Gambs 1932, pp. 81–2.

349 'Special Meeting of the General Executive Board', *Solidarity*, no. 34 (104), 30 October 1920.

350 'Vote on the Referendum' and 'Report of the Ballot Committee', *Solidarity*, no. 41 (111), 18 December 1920. See also Gambs 1932, p. 82. Gambs writes there: 'I have not been able to get figures on the geographical distribution of the voting, but would venture the opinion that the most important opposition to Communism came from the Western members'.

351 This claim was made in the official *Bericht über die Internationale Syndikalistische Konferenz*, Amsterdam, 1921 (cf. note 12). Even if the number of 100,000 members was an exaggeration, a question mark remains over the very low level of participation in the referendum. Gambs (1932, p. 175) has this to say: 'Aside from lack of interest and ignorance – both generally and of organisational affairs – inactivity may be the result of members' being marooned in lumber or construction camps, remote from a post office; or of their moving about so frequently that ballots are not forwarded'.

352 Gambs 1932, p. 83.

But now a new element entered the discussion. The IWW finally became apprised of the existence of the ITUC, and its intention to organise an international trade-union congress. This was no longer a 'political' international but a 'purely economic' one.³⁵³ It was logical that voices were now raised within the IWW in favour of participation in the Moscow trade-union congress.³⁵⁴ This line of thinking was also strengthened by the result of the Berlin conference, which had also voted in favour of participation, by a majority that included the IWW delegates. At the conference, Belen'ky had also invited Hardy and Barker to visit Russia, and they did so. Hardy returned to the USA just in time to attend the 13th IWW convention. The impression he conveyed of his trip could not have been more positive. He sharply attacked the syndicalist critics of Soviet Russia, from both the FAUD and the IWW, and he emphasised the positive results of his conversations with Lenin and Zinoviev. The latter had explicitly told him that the IWW's place was in the 'industrial international'. The Bolsheviks no longer expected the union to join the Comintern.³⁵⁵ Hardy's position was supported by Jack Tanner, who had arrived in the USA with him in April. He took part in the IWW convention as the representative of the British Shop Stewards and spoke at a number of meetings.³⁵⁶ The message from the National Committee of the Shop Stewards' Movement which was read out at the convention ended in an appeal to the IWW to take part in the Moscow congress.³⁵⁷

The IWW therefore decided that it would send a delegate to Moscow.³⁵⁸ George Williams was chosen for the mission. According to Hardy's

353 The ITUC's founding declaration and its manifesto of 1 August were published in *Solidarity*, no. 35 (105), 6 November 1920, and in *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 12 (22), December 1920, each time accompanied by a denial of announcements in the communist press that the IWW had taken part in the founding of the ITUC in Moscow. The *Industrial Pioneer* also published a translation of Lozovsky's pamphlet on the formation of the ITUC in numbers 1 to 4, running from February to April 1921.

354 Cf. for example, George Andreytchine, 'Towards an International of Action', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 1, February 1921, pp. 30–2.

355 'George Hardy's Report to the Convention', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 5, June 1921, pp. 3–9. See also Hardy's own account of the circumstances of his trip to Soviet Russia (Hardy 1956, pp. 133–43). Tom Barker, who remained in Russia until the autumn of 1921, also gained a positive impression, which he brought back to the USA. Cf. 'Red Russia and the I.W.W. A Letter from Tom Barker', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 3, April 1921, pp. 3–5.

356 Cf. 'Jack Tanner, fraternal delegate to convention', *Solidarity*, no. 134, 28 May 1921, and the interview 'Flashlights on Labor and Revolution', in *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 5, June 1921, pp. 10–14.

357 Brown 1921, p. 40.

358 The election of a delegate to go to Moscow is not mentioned either in the reports on the

memoirs, Williams stated at the convention that he fully agreed with the policy of support for the Soviet government and the twenty-one conditions,³⁵⁹ although at the RILU congress itself he was to be a central figure in the opposition. The rww convention had of course mandated him with precise instructions for the congress, so as to retain the ultimate power of decision. He was 'not empowered or instructed to do more than participate, put forward the rww's position and bring back a report. On the basis of that report the membership would then determine the policy of the organisation towards affiliation'.³⁶⁰ Thus the decision which had apparently already been taken by the referendum was re-opened.

Shortly before the convention there was an event which, although it had no immediate political impact, was to contribute to poisoning the atmosphere between the Wobblies and the communists in the subsequent period. The rww defendants in the Chicago trial of 1918 had earlier been freed on bail. In April 1921, their appeal was rejected by the Supreme Court and they had to return to the federal penitentiary of Fort Leavenworth. Some of them, however, headed by Bill Haywood and George Andreytchine, failed to respond to their bail, went underground and left for Russia, where they would later take part in setting up the RILU.³⁶¹ They had long sympathised with communism, and they were no doubt already members of the American communist party.³⁶² Their flight had, however, an immediate consequence for the rww, which was very damaging:

convention published in *Solidarity* (nos. 132, 14 May 1921 to 135, 4 June 1921), or in the June and July issues of *Industrial Pioneer*. Presumably they wanted to keep the trip a secret so as not to endanger the arrangements for his departure. Only after Williams was already on the way to Russia did *Solidarity* announce this ('George Williams, I.W.W. Delegate to Red International', *Solidarity*, no. 139, 2 July 1921).

359 Hardy 1956, p. 144.

360 'As to the Red International', *Industrial Solidarity*, no. 156, 29 October 1921.

361 Cf. on this Dubofsky 1969, pp. 459–60.

362 According to the account in his memoirs, it was the Comintern's Open Letter which had induced Bill Haywood to join the communist party: 'After I had finished reading it, I called Ralph Chaplin over to my table and said to him "What it says here is what we have always dreamed of" ... As soon as the consolidation of the Communist Party of the USA had been achieved I became a member' (Haywood 1929, pp. 360–1). On Haywood's position shortly before his flight, see the interview by Max Eastman, 'Bill Haywood, Communist', in *Liberator*, no. 4, April 1921, pp. 13–14. In this interview he emphatically supported the affiliation of the rww to the future RILU. (Dubofsky, on the other hand, stressed the difficult personal situation which led Haywood to go to Russia and to burn all his bridges with America, no doubt unintentionally. This did not apply to the other fugitives, however. The position of the rww is given in *Solidarity*, no. 130, 30 April 1921).

bail of 1,000 dollars had now been forfeited. Many members of the IWW had got together to lend this money to the organisation. Now it had laboriously to collect the money so as to be able to give it back.³⁶³ All this created bad feeling. It did not affect the decision on joining the RILU, since this was to be made on the basis of the report Williams would bring back after his return from Russia, the defendants who had fled the country only represented themselves, and there was still sufficient sympathy for communism in the IWW to allow a pro-communist tendency to be formed within it at the end of 1921. In any case, Haywood's stay in Moscow was of the highest symbolic significance, and the Bolsheviks made use of it to the full extent.

While the Wobblies could at least summon up a certain amount of enthusiasm for a joint trade-union international with 'Moscow', the FAUD was at the opposite end of the spectrum. For the FAUD, the determining factor was its critique of the Bolsheviks' fundamental principles. In the eyes of the FAUD, the RILU was hardly different in principle from the Comintern.³⁶⁴

First of all, it turned out that Souchy's participation in the discussions in Moscow which led to the foundation of the ITUC did not ultimately mean that he became a member. To what extent his participation in those discussions should be regarded as constituting adherence to the organisation was unclear and disputed from the outset. It is true that he did actually take part in sittings of the ITUC in the second half of August.³⁶⁵ Unlike syndicalists such as Pestaña or Rosmer, who had come to Moscow carrying decisions by their organisations to join the Comintern in their luggage, Souchy had no such mandate. He was therefore unable to transfer his mandate from the Comintern to the ITUC as the other two had done (and as Borghi would as well, later on) and so he

363 On this, see "‘Big Bill’ Haywood's Defection to Russia and the IWW: Two Letters", *Labor History*, no. 2, 1976, pp. 271–8. In his memoirs, which were written in Moscow, Haywood did not mention this result of his flight at all. When the communists organised his escape, they were alleged to have guaranteed to replace the forfeited bail money. Haywood referred to this in an interview done in Moscow for a pro-communist American journal: 'I am very lucky to have friends who will make sure that the people who have gone bail for me don't lose out' (Lewis Gannett, 'Bill Haywood in Moscow', *Liberator*, no. 9, September 1921, pp. 11–12). But this never happened.

364 In this context, the remarks made by Hardy to a Danish syndicalist paper on the differences of principle between the Western European syndicalists and the American 'industrialists' are interesting ('George Hardy on the I.W.W.', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 4, May 1921, pp. 12–13). According to this, he thought the main differences were over the questions of centralism or federalism and respect for the economic theories of Marxism or rejection of them.

365 See above, and section 3 of this chapter.

could not sign the founding declaration of the ITUC. In the middle of August, a compromise had been achieved between those who had signed and the 'intransigent' syndicalists. But the ITUC had made it clear at its sitting on 20 August that only the German syndicalists themselves could decide whether they wanted to be represented. There was a fierce clash of views at the Berlin syndicalist conference over this resolution. While the Russian representatives who were present at the conference regarded it as a proven fact that Souchy had joined the ITUC on behalf of the FAUD, he himself gave an entirely different explanation. According to him, a representative of the German metalworkers – he didn't mention the name, but it was probably Rusch, who was a member of the Berlin delegation which arrived in Russia in the middle of August – had protested against the special representation given to the German syndicalists in the ITUC. The only purpose of the resolution, Souchy said, was to prevent other German trade unions from taking over the representation rights of the FAUD if they joined the ITUC in the future. In any case, he had not possessed any kind of mandate to join the ITUC on behalf of the FAUD. Lozovsky also knew that the FAUD's decision on affiliation would only be taken after his return to Germany.³⁶⁶ It was perhaps not clear to him when he took part in the sittings that this could in any way amount to a declaration of membership, which was the way the Russians understood the matter – falsely, in his view. On the other hand, his attitude to the ITUC was still very much influenced by the uproar ignited at the end of August by the circular which was intended to start the process of subordinating the bureaux of the ITUC in each country to the local communist parties. The version of events which he gave to the FAUD conference in March 1921 and which he was still repeating decades later indicates that with this circular a fundamental dividing line had been drawn in his view.³⁶⁷ Against this background, therefore, he perhaps understood his participation in the Moscow discussions as informal and nothing more. In any case, it is impossible today to arrive at a definitive judgment on this controversy.

It is of course clear that after Souchy's return the FAUD never regarded itself as belonging to the ITUC. At the beginning of November, Murphy, who was *en route* to Great Britain from Moscow, stopped off in Berlin for a short time. He sought out the Executive Committee of the FAUD and communicated to it the proposal to form a Berlin Bureau of the ITUC together with the KPD and to

366 These are Souchy's words as quoted in Severin's conference report, *Solidarity*, no. 122, 5 March 1921. In his own report to *Der Syndikalist*, he does not mention this argument.

367 'Reichskonferenz der Freien Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Syndikalisten). II. Teil', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 11, 1921; Augustin Souchy, 'Der Syndikalismus vor fünfzig Jahren', *Neues Beginnen*, no. 9, 1971, pp. 7–8.

publish a joint press organ. The FAUD emphatically rejected this on grounds of principle, on account of the incompatibility between ‘party communism’ and syndicalism, in other words the incompatibility between ‘cell-building’ within the reformist trade unions³⁶⁸ and the existence of an independent revolutionary trade-union movement.³⁶⁹

This attitude was expressed still more plainly in a letter to the Russian trade unions. The Executive Committee of the FAUD had received a report from Souchy, it said. The VTsSPS should take note that the FAUD did not want to belong to ‘Amsterdam’, but was in favour of an international of syndicalists and ‘industrialists’. It had therefore called a conference, after discussions with the other syndicalist organisations, which would be a successor to the London Congress of 1913, and the Russian trade unions were also invited to this. Apart from that, the FAUD was opposed to any subordination of unions to parties, and to any combination of unions and parties, partly because of the experience it had had. However, it was ready to take part in the Moscow congress.³⁷⁰ Although the letter made no reference to the ITUC, the FAUD’s refusal to join was implicit in this declaration.³⁷¹ The only reason for the lack of any reference to the ITUC was perhaps that during those months of October and November, the ITUC had not come into public view apart from through a

368 The attack on communist factional activity in the free trade unions was a favourite theme of FAUD polemics. Cf. for example, Benjamin, ‘Keim- oder Giftzellen’, *Der Syndikalist*, no. 1, 1921, and H. Reuss, ‘Die K.P.D.-Rätezentrale in Aktion!’, *Der Syndikalist*, no. 4, 1921. The following passage occurs in the latter article: ‘The stupidity and helplessness of those who always let themselves be led by the nose made it possible for people like Brandler, Malzahn, Lorenz-Schönebeck, Wolf, and Düwell to establish themselves as a “Central Office of Factory Councils” [*Betriebsrätezentrale*] without having ever even seen a factory. Apart from editorial offices, that is, where the main tools are a pair of scissors and a pot of paste’. The ‘Central Office of Factory Councils’ had in fact been the trade-union arm of the left wing of the USPD. It changed its name to National Trade Union Centre [*Reichsgewerkschaftszentrale*] after the amalgamation of the Left USPD with the KPD.

369 F.B. ‘Die Konvulsionen des Syndikalismus oder Die Konfusionen des Herrn Belinki’, *Der Syndikalist*, no. 5, 1921; M.W. ‘Moskau und der Syndikalismus’, *Der Syndikalist*, no. 7, 1921. It should be noted that Murphy clearly proceeded from the expectation that the FAUD would be a suitable partner in this activity on behalf of the ITUC.

370 Printed in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 47, 1920.

371 It was therefore very easy for a member of the FAUD’s Executive Committee to draw this conclusion during the Berlin conference, when (as reported by Severin) he made reference to ‘a letter from the syndicalist organisations of Germany directed to Moscow in which it was clearly announced that they had not decided to become members’ (*Solidarity*, no. 122, 5 March 1921).

few proclamations emerging from Moscow. It only became publicly visible in Germany at the turn of the year through the campaign initiated by its newly-founded Berlin Bureau for participation in the Moscow congress, as well as through the publication of its information journal.

After the Berlin conference, where the Russians had once again raised the question of FAUD's affiliation to the ITUC, Fritz Kater, speaking for the FAUD Executive Committee, made its refusal to do this explicit and public: 'The Executive Committee had neither itself given, or allowed any representative to give, any declaration implying entry into this International Trade Union Council'.³⁷²

The Berlin conference appeared at least to have resulted in a clear decision to send FAUD delegates to Moscow. This decision did not seem to have changed with the arrival of the first issue of the new organ of the Berlin Bureau of the ITUC in mid-January, which contained a manifesto addressed to the 'revolutionary workers and employees in trade unions, syndicates and industrial unions', warning members of the FAUD against their leaders 'Rocker, Kater and others' who only wanted to go to Moscow in order to 'help their dead anarchist dogmas to win a victory'. Instead of electing such people, the Berlin bureau added, members should only elect delegates for whom 'the interests of the proletarian revolution are more important than the interests of antiquated dogmas'.³⁷³ The Executive Committee of the FAUD reacted by issuing an angry declaration: 'whether the FAUD goes to the Moscow congress, how many delegates there will be, who is sent, and what position they will take up once there, will be discussed and decided at a conference'.³⁷⁴

372 Fritz Kater, 'Erklärung', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 51/52, 1920. Kater's statement was provoked by a remark in a pamphlet by Lozovsky (*Der Internationale Rat*, p. 67). A report sent from Moscow on 8 September about the entry of new members into the ITUC is printed in an appendix to the pamphlet, including this passage: 'The affiliation of the English Factory Committees and the German syndicalists to the International Council of Trade and Industrial Unions [the ITUC] is the result of the conferences which took place in Moscow after the end of the Second Congress of the Third International. With this action the representatives of the English Factory Committees and the German syndicalists have definitively adopted the standpoint of the Russian delegation. This can only be welcomed, since in this way the unity of the left wing of the trade union movement over the whole world appears to have been secured'. (Lozovsky, who had written this pamphlet on the formation of the ITUC, had already left Russia at the beginning of August, and therefore had no direct knowledge of the compromise that had been negotiated in the middle of the month with the 'intransigent' syndicalists).

373 'An die revolutionären Arbeiter und Angestellten in den Gewerkschaften, Syndikaten und Unionen!', *Die rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 1, 15 January 1921.

374 'Wir und der Moskauer Kongress', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 5, 1921.

The conference in question met on 6 and 7 March 1921, and it examined the results of the Berlin conference, on which Rocker gave a full report, and the question of participation in the Moscow congress. The mood in regard to going to Moscow, already very critical, was made more so by the presence of 'Wilkens' as a guest (his series of articles in *Le Libéraire* had just created a big sensation). A number of resolutions from ordinary members of the FAUD called for a direct rejection of the Moscow invitation. A large number of speakers, however, pointed out that nothing would be lost by participating. The congress might possibly be held in another country. In any case, the delegates should be given a fixed mandate. The need to hold onto the principles of the FAUD was clear. Finally the main resolution against participation was voted down, and it was decided to let the whole of the membership decide in a nationwide referendum. Just in case, a delegation was elected at the meeting. News of the current situation in Soviet Russia also had an impact on the discussion. Rocker referred to the first reports on the Kronstadt uprising which had just come in, as well as the discussion in the Bolshevik Party over the trade-union question. A protest against the arrests among the Russian anarchists was also passed by the meeting.³⁷⁵

The result of the referendum was announced in July: 6,165 members had voted for participation, but 7,321 had voted against. With this, the decision had been made not to send FAUD delegates to Moscow. The Executive Committee did however comment that 'approximately 300 organisations, accounting for 75,000 members altogether, did not respond to the call to take part in the referendum'. It also pointed out that it had already made known its views about participation before the March conference.³⁷⁶ The Berlin Bureau of the ITUC reacted to the result by saying that it showed the members' 'lack of interest' in the question, and it was certainly right in this. At the same time, its assertion that the 6,165 'Yes' votes expressed the desire of a 'considerable number of members' to 'travel the road of the revolutionary class struggle against the will of the leadership' would prove to be a gross overestimate.³⁷⁷

In fact, the FAUD had now arrived at a firm and stable politico-ideological foundation. It had found counter-arguments to Bolshevism by adopting the positions of anarchism, and in subsequent months these positions would find additional confirmation in the experience of the syndicalist participants who

375 'Reichskonferenz der Freien Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Syndikalisten)', *Der Syndikalist*, nos. 10 and 11, 1921.

376 'Bekanntmachung betreffend Urabstimmung', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 26, 1921.

377 'Die Syndikalistin und Moskau', *Der rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 26, 16 July 1921.

came from other countries to participate in the founding congress of the RILU, as also in the whole course of internal development in Soviet Russia, the keywords here being Kronstadt, the persecution of the anarchists and the New Economic Policy. A comprehensive expression of this trend was the detailed analysis published by Rudolf Rocker at the end of 1921 under the expressive title *'Der Bankrott des russischen Staatskommunismus'* [*The Bankruptcy of Russian State Communism*]. Thus it was not by chance that once the RILU congress was over, the FAUD became the starting-point for the development of a separate anarcho-syndicalist international.

It would, however, be a mistake to assume that this wish of the FAUD to distinguish itself from the communists derived simply from a clash between rival political theories. It was also affected by the sharp organisational confrontation with the communists, in which the FAUD suffered a number of painful defeats at this time. A large part of its organisation in Rhineland-Westphalia, where it had significant influence among the mineworkers, split away in the course of 1920, and this worked out to the advantage of the communists. The split created the *'Freie Arbeiter-Union Gelsenkirchen'* (FAU-G) [*Free Workers' Union Gelsenkirchen*], a name derived from its headquarters, which were located in Gelsenkirchen. As time went on, this union moved increasingly towards the KPD and the ITUC (see section 6.1 of this chapter).

The exit of the miners of Rhineland-Westphalia was a severe blow to the FAUD, which after its phase of rapid expansion in 1919–20 now entered a process of continuous decline which made it a marginal force in the Ruhr district. At the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921, the FAUD repeatedly brought up the Gelsenkirchen Union, when discussing its relation to 'Moscow' and the communists, as an example of the latter's baseness and dishonesty. 'Shady and unprincipled characters were bribed with Russian money ... A whole series of small organisations then veered off into the Gelsenkirchen camp taking the cash and the union's inventory with them and leaving behind a considerable burden of debt to the Executive Committee of the FAUD'. It sounded like the proverbial activity of 'whistling to keep your courage up' when they emphasised at the same time that the loss of members was 'in total very minimal'. Every day new local groups were being set up, they said, and many people 'came back to the syndicalists when they realised how they had been swindled'.³⁷⁸

378 M.W. 'Moskau und der Syndikalismus', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 7, 1921. Similar comments in 'Die Wahrheit wider Willen', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 9, 1921 (this was a reply to an article by a Gelsenkirchen leader in the communist press). Fritz Kater argued in almost exactly the same way when he opened the FAUD conference in March (cf. *Der Syndikalist*, no. 10, 1921).

The conflict between the FAUD and the *Schiffahrtsbund* [*Maritime Union*], which was associated with it, was much less acrimonious at first, although it was already clear in the first few months of 1921 that the seamen were much more sympathetic to Moscow than the rest of the FAUD. The *Schiffahrtsbund* had emerged from the radical seamen's movement after the end of the First World War, though even before the war it was possible to observe the beginnings of syndicalism in that branch of the economy. The *Schiffahrtsbund* had great influence in its section of industry and it was a serious competitor to the Transport Workers' Union, which was affiliated to the free trade-union movement, the ADGB.³⁷⁹ It was originally an organisation purely for ordinary seamen, under the name Seamen's Union, but in September 1920 an association of higher-ranking sailors joined it and it became an organisation covering the whole industry,³⁸⁰ at which point it adopted the name of *Schiffahrtsbund* by which it would finally be known. In the course of 1919, a 'unionist' minority, which was most likely limited to the port of Bremerhaven, left the *Schiffahrtsbund*.³⁸¹ The remainder joined the FAUD at its 12th Congress, which was held at the end of December 1919. There was already a certain communist presence in the union in 1920. For example, one of its leading functionaries, Otto Rieger, worked in Stettin for the Russians and assisted them in their search for contacts within the syndicalist milieu.

The *Schiffahrtsbund* discussed its international orientation at a conference held in Stettin on 20 and 21 January 1921.³⁸² The existing international organisation was the International Seafarers' Federation (ISF), the international of the seamen's trade. This had originated in opposition to the ITF and was entirely dominated by the British seamen's leader J. Havelock Wilson, a man of strongly nationalist convictions who stood on the extreme right wing of the TUC.³⁸³

Numerous reports in *Der Syndikalist* on local activities during this period showed how difficult the Gelsenkirchen Union was making things for the FAUD in the Ruhr district. In any case, the factory council election results (cf. section 6.1 of this chapter) are the best evidence of the real relation of forces between the two organisations.

379 Cf. Rübner 1994, pp. 89–114, on the history of the *Schiffahrtsbund*.

380 In the next two years, the head of this association, Captain Gieseler, would become one of the leading personalities in the *Schiffahrtsbund*, and he went on to represent it in Moscow.

381 This group was led by Maurice Disch, and it then became the seamen's section of the AAU. It would also be represented at the RILU founding congress, by Disch himself.

382 On this conference, cf. 'Der Weg nach Moskau', *Schiffahrtswarte*, no. 2, 4 February 1921; 'Die Seeleute für Moskau', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 4, February 1921; M.W. 'Moskau und der Syndikalismus', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 7, 1921; and F.K. 'Spaltpilze in der syndikalistischen Bewegung', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 8, 1921.

383 On the International Seafarers' Federation, which was founded in 1918 but had its begin-

There was, however, opposition within the ranks of the ISF, based on the Dutch and Scandinavian unions. Nevertheless, despite its sympathies for the Dutch and Scandinavian unions, the conference decided to address itself directly to Moscow and to push at the Moscow congress for the setting up of a revolutionary seamen's international in opposition to the ISF. The delegates were emphatically supported in this by the communist representatives who were present at the conference, Bogdanov from the Russian trade unions and the ITUC and Fritz Heckert from the KPD's national trade-union centre. The conference also elected Otto Rieger as international secretary. The FAUD Executive Committee had not been invited and it issued an angry commentary on what had happened. A breach seemed to be unavoidable.

But the FAUD conference of 6 and 7 March, which had as the main point of the agenda its attitude towards the Moscow trade-union congress, was again able to bridge over the conflict.³⁸⁴ Although there was a minority which demanded the direct expulsion of the *Schiffahrtsbund* from the FAUD, it was finally accepted that it should send its own delegates to Moscow. In return for this concession, its representatives at the FAUD conference agreed that its delegates would accept the obligation to put forward in Moscow the six points voted by the Berlin conference of December.

But then the course of a nationwide meeting of the *Schiffahrtsbund* between 22–26 May showed that the two organisations now had practically nothing in common.³⁸⁵ This time the FAUD sent several representatives, including a member of its Executive Committee. Rieger, who had taken part in an international conference in Russia, spoke on the situation of the international seamen's movement, and informed the delegates about the course of the conference, which had called an international seamen's conference for the month of October. The member of the FAUD Executive Committee who was present made a

nings in the prewar period, cf. the short account by Hartmut Rübner (Rübner 1997, pp. 77–88). It was very quickly forced out of the ITF by skilful manoeuvring on the part of Edo Fimmen, and this led to its dissolution in 1925. For the *Schiffahrtsbund*'s own justification of its attitude, cf. in detail 'Die britische "International Seafarers' Federation" oder Rote Seemännische Internationale', *Schiffahrtswarte*, no. 5, 19 March 1921, no. 7, 15 April 1921, and no. 8, 29 April 1921.

384 On this part of the conference, cf. 'Reichskonferenz der Freien Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands (Syndikalisten). II. Teil', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 11, 1921, and also 'Reichskonferenz', *Schiffahrtswarte*, no. 5, 19 March 1921.

385 'Der Verlauf des Bundestages und sein Ergebnis', *Schiffahrtswarte*, no. 10, 28 May 1921, and 'Deutsche Syndikalisten für die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 24, 2 July 1921.

sharp attack on Rieger, accusing him of continuing to be an employee of the Russian state despite an FAUD resolution against this. He issued Rieger with an ultimatum, saying he must cease this activity. When the conference declined to follow him in this, there was uproar. The two FAUD representatives left the conference. But this seems rather to have increased its unanimity. It finally elected a delegation of three to go to Moscow. Admittedly, as it turned out these delegates would belong to the syndicalist opposition *bloc* at the Moscow congress, and they would become involved in an extra conflict with 'Moscow' over the question of a separate seamen's international. But they had now in effect taken the road that would lead the *Schiffahrtsbund* to join the RILU and in this way become part of the communist movement.

With the defection of the *Schiffahrtsbund* the FAUD had suffered a further crack in its organisation, even if it remained peripheral. The unity of the organisation's core was not endangered by the question of participation in the Moscow congress, as the referendum demonstrated. But one more piece of the influence won for syndicalism in Germany during the postwar wave of revolution had now crumbled away.

The situation in France was entirely different. Here a revolutionary minority had grown up in a national centre affiliated to Amsterdam. It did have an organisational structure at its disposal in the shape of the *Comités syndicalistes révolutionnaires* (CSRs), but its first objective was to win control over the CGT. Its rapid declaration in favour of the Comintern did not hide the fact that its political and ideological point of departure lay in the traditions of revolutionary French syndicalism, and an orientation towards a political party was entirely alien to it. As the resolutions of the Second World Congress became known, a process to which the leaders of the CGT majority eagerly contributed, by quoting extracts from the relevant Bolshevik resolutions at CGT congresses,³⁸⁶ the question inevitably began to be posed as to how far unity right across the board from anarchists to communists, which the CSR delegates at the Berlin conference had sworn to uphold, could actually be maintained.

Only the 'Noyau', or 'hard core', the syndicalist-communist grouping around *La Vie Ouvrière*, with Pierre Monatte as its main spokesman and Alfred Rosmer as its representative in Moscow, identified itself in a thoroughgoing way with the Bolsheviks. This group also regarded Trotsky and Lozovsky as the necessary interlocutors who were familiar with the traditions of revolution-

386 Cf. for example, Merrheim's speech at the Orleans congress (*XXI^e Congrès National Corporatif* (xve de la C. G. T.). *Tenu à Orléans du 27 Septembre au 2 Octobre 1920. Compte rendu des travaux*, Paris, 1920, pp. 360–93).

ary syndicalism in France, and, conversely, the two Bolsheviks made intensive efforts to explain to their French comrades that there was no difference of principle between the syndicalist conception of the role of the 'active minority' and the Bolshevik model of the party.³⁸⁷ With the decision to set up a revolutionary trade-union international side by side with the Comintern – and this too was a part of the famous Twenty-One Conditions – the appropriate place appeared to have been created for the syndicalists to be able to defend the Russian Revolution and to imitate it in France, as Monatte wrote, 'under the same broad communist roof'.³⁸⁸ But even someone like Bouët, of the teachers' union, who like Monatte had been one of the first supporters of the October Revolution, quickly announced his reservations about the subordination of the trade unions to the party, as proclaimed by the Second Comintern Congress. He did this in November 1920 in the same breath as he defended the decision to establish the CSRs against a fierce attack by Jouhaux.³⁸⁹

In fact there was a whole tendency within the CGT Minority grouped around the 'independence of the trade union movement', which was the traditional attitude of syndicalism, as expressed in the Charter of Amiens. The members of this group were, on the one hand, determined opponents of the reformist leadership around Jouhaux, Dumoulin and Merrheim and they fought against them as the enemies of the revolution. But on the other hand, they rejected the ideas of the Bolsheviks just as emphatically and had no intention of allowing the purified, revolutionary CGT for which they were fighting to be dominated by a communist party of any kind. This general incompatibility between two different political and ideological conceptions was an important factor in the formation of the 'pure syndicalist' current. But it was not the only one. An equally significant role was played, without a doubt, by the gradual emergence of more precise information about the Russian Revolution, from the anarchist point of view. This information was distributed by *Le Libéraire*, the influential organ of the *Union anarchiste*, particularly through the reports of 'Wilkens'.³⁹⁰

387 Cf. for example, Trotsky's 'Lettre à un syndicaliste' (this was Monatte) printed in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 82, 26 November 1920, and Lozovsky's 'Reformizm, revoliutsionnyi sindikalizm i kommunizm. Pis'mo Monattu i Lorio', 12 November 1920, reprinted in Lozovsky 1930, pp. 160–94.

388 P. Lemont, 'Avec Moscou, sans conditions, et dans la C.G.T. quand même', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 79, 28 October 1920. (Lemont was Monatte's pseudonym while he was in prison).

389 Cf. the minutes of the meeting in *La Voix du peuple*, no. 11, November 1920, pp. 681–93, here pp. 684–5.

390 On the attitude of the French anarchists towards the Russian Revolution, see Maitron 1975, vol. 2, pp. 41–55. In Maitron's view, the change from the previous essentially positive

The biographer of Griffuelhes, Bruce Vandervoort, has sketched a collective portrait of this grouping of 'pure syndicalists': they were younger than either the leaders of the reformist majority around Jouhaux or the revolutionary syndicalists of *La Vie Ouvrière*. With some exceptions they first played a role in the CGT towards the end of the war. They were ideologically influenced by anarchism, without belonging to any of the various anarchist groups. In their combination of anarchist ideology and revolutionary trade-union practice, they expressed an 'anarcho-syndicalism' which can only be regarded as a continuation of the revolutionary syndicalism of the prewar era to some extent.³⁹¹

In February 1921, eighteen leading advocates of 'pure syndicalism' made a 'pact' (this was the way their agreement was referred to) aimed at gaining victory for their position.³⁹² The first item of the pact (out of a total of 11) was characteristic enough: 'The existence of our committee is not to be revealed to anyone'. They proposed, in the style of a Bakuninist secret society or a 'syndicalist lodge of freemasons' (as Lozovsky put it),³⁹³ to take over the leadership of the CGT and implement the principles of revolutionary syndicalism by engaging in resolute factional activity. The goals they set themselves, such as 'to secure the autonomy of the trade union movement' and 'not to make concessions to external influences', indicated that their attack was directed against the leading role of the communist party.

The pact of February 1921 remained secret at first. It only became known in summer 1922, shortly before the CGTU congress at Saint-Étienne, though rumours about it had been circulating for some time. When it did become known, this had a result that the signatories had not intended at all, as we shall see later. In the first few months of its existence, however, it produced the desired effect. Already at the end of May, Monatte and Godonnèche were removed from the secretariat of the CSR movement and replaced by Besnard and two more 'pure syndicalists'. Besnard became the voice of the anarcho-syndicalist current in France.³⁹⁴ The trend became plainer still with the choice

attitude to one of hostility took place between autumn 1920 and spring 1921. He gives a similar evaluation for Italy (Maitron 1975, vol. 2, pp. 49–50).

391 Vandervoort 1996, pp. 226–9.

392 The history of this pact is presented in Vandervoort 1996, pp. 233–5, and Maitron 1975, vol. 2, pp. 58–65. The text is printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme*, pp. 277–8. Although Griffuelhes was not one of the signatories, it is likely that he played the decisive role in inspiring the pact and that, as Vandervoort has shown, he acted as an *éminence grise* during the whole affair.

393 Losowsky 1922, p. 64.

394 Cf. Thorpe 1996.

of the nine-strong delegation entitled to attend the founding congress of the RILU. Seven of them were 'pure syndicalists'. Their mandate, as laid down by the CSR Central Committee, was eloquent enough. It was published by the FAUD's organ with great approbation.³⁹⁵ It specified that the delegation must demand the trade-union international's independence of the Comintern, and that it must accordingly vote against the proposal for reciprocal representation in the leadership of each international.³⁹⁶ Most important of all, the delegation was not empowered to declare its definitive affiliation to the RILU. A congress of the whole CSR movement would need to decide that at a later date. All this reservations made it clear that the French delegation at the Moscow congress would form the kernel of the syndicalist opposition.

The discussion among the Italian syndicalists, in contrast, did not seem to involve any great attempt to draw a line of separation, given the enforced absence of Borghi, who remained in prison until summer 1921. At the end of May, the executive committee of the USI elected Nicola Vecchi and Duilio Mari as its two delegates to Moscow. Their mandate was based on the resolutions of the Berlin conference, the independence of the revolutionary trade unions from political parties and so on. But they would not arrive in Moscow until the congress had already ended – just like Borghi the year before – and their role was therefore limited to participating in the discussions between syndicalists after the congress.³⁹⁷ The fact that there had been constant polemics with the communists, who kept calling on the USI to put into effect the line of the Comintern, did not seem to have had any negative effect in advance of the decision on participation.³⁹⁸ The same applies to the various letters addressed by the Comintern to the Italian workers, in which the USI leadership was sharply criticised.³⁹⁹ But whatever attitude the USI delegates would take at

395 'Die Stellung der revolutionären Syndikalisten Frankreichs auf dem Gewerkschaftskongress in Moskau', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 27, 1921.

396 Godonnèche wrote in the newspaper published during the Third Comintern Congress (*Moscou*, no. 34, 6 July 1921) that when the Central Committee of the CSRs voted on this question he was the only person (since Monatte was absent) who was ready to recognise 'reciprocal representation'. This issue continued to be sharply contested between Paris and Moscow right up to the second RILU congress. He also points out that, ironically, some of the 'pure syndicalists' had communist party membership cards in their pockets just in case.

397 Thorpe 1989, p. 174 and Antonioli 1990, pp. 120–1. The lengthy mandate, which included a statement of principles and a draft statute, is printed in *Sempre!* 1923, pp. 141–6 and in Borghi 1964, pp. 176–81.

398 Borghi 1964, p. 112.

399 Thorpe 1989, p. 174.

the Moscow congress, it could be assumed that what would be really decisive in forming opinion in the organisation would be Borghi's report and Borghi's position, which would become known after his release, when he could again express himself freely.

In the CNT, too, the course of the discussion was strongly influenced by the fact that Pestaña had been arrested after he returned to Spain and thus could not take up a public position on the issues. The initial impression was that he had returned from Moscow full of enthusiasm. This was reported, for instance, by Salvador Seguí, one of the most important leaders of the Catalan CNT, and he even asserted that this was based on a conversation with Pestaña.⁴⁰⁰

What was decisive for the internal dynamic of the CNT in those months was the immense repression that had been visited upon the organisation, particularly in its stronghold, Catalonia. To effect this repression, the state had recourse to the terrorism of the yellow trade unions, the so-called '*sindicatos libres*', which had emerged from the Carlist movement. They formed the shock troops used against the CNT; the latter, after its meteoric rise in 1918 and 1919, was somewhat taken by surprise by the wave of repression which began early in 1920.⁴⁰¹ A further means of decapitating the CNT was to shoot arrested activists, particularly the leading personalities, 'while they were attempting to escape'. Some of the anarchist groups responded to this with counter-terror, although there were of course people in the CNT who rejected this method. This creeping civil war culminated in spectacular fashion in March 1921 when the secretary of the CNT National Committee, Evelí Boal, who was already in prison, was shot 'while attempting to escape', to which the anarchists replied by assassinating the Spanish prime minister, Dato. For the CNT, this had the result that a number of younger activists, who often came from anarchist groups, and were not so well-known outside the trade-union movement, took over leading positions. Two names in particular stand out: Andreu Nin, who now became the secretary of the National Committee, and Joaquín Maurín, the secretary of the Catalan Regional Committee.

Both of them were spokesmen of the tendency which identified itself unambiguously and unhesitatingly with the Bolsheviks. Nin, directly after leaving the PSOE and joining the CNT, had already proclaimed his support for the Bolsheviks at the 1919 CNT congress. Maurín, who started as the secretary of the CNT local federation in Lérida, in the province of Catalonia, wrote his articles in its organ, *Lucha social*. This newspaper became of more than regional importance

400 Bar 1981, p. 613.

401 On this, see Bar 1981, p. 613, and Meaker 1974.

during the repression in Barcelona, where the central organ of the CNT had been prohibited. Maurín put forward a peculiar mixture between Lenin and Trotsky, who were of course little known figures at that stage, on the one hand, and Georges Sorel and other theorists of French syndicalism, on the other. In international terms, the two young syndicalists were closest to the French grouping around *La Vie Ouvrière*.⁴⁰²

The criticisms Pestaña had brought back from Moscow were not yet known. Moreover, the resolution of the 1919 CNT congress in favour of joining the Comintern continued to be valid. Accordingly, a plenum of the CNT met on 28 April 1921 to choose the members of the delegation to be sent to the Moscow congress.⁴⁰³ It originally consisted of four people: Nin and Maurín, and in addition Jesús Ibáñez from Asturias and Hilario Arlandis from Valencia. But Arlandis proposed that a fifth delegate should be added, from the federation of anarchist groups (the 'specific groups', or 'affinity groups' which existing alongside the trade union). The choice fell on Gaston Leval.

Another point on the plenum's agenda was the CNT's attitude towards terrorism, which was certainly a more important issue for the survival of the union. But owing to the conditions of illegality in which it was held it was not fully representative. Some regional federations were absent, and, as it happened, they were those which had already uttered strong criticisms of communism.⁴⁰⁴ Later on, when the CNT delegation at the RILU congress came under criticism for its 'pro-Bolshevik' attitude, this fact caused the anarchists to talk about an 'illegal' plenum, which had been brought about by manipulation. It was almost

402 There is a sketch of the positions of both Nin and Maurín in Meaker 1974, pp. 387–92. The article 'La revolución rusa ante el sindicalismo' (*Lucha social*, no. 27, 24 July 1920) is a typical example of Maurín's views. In it he greets the Russian Revolution as the greatest event since the French Revolution, but criticises the system because it rests on the Soviets – a kind of parliament – and not on the trade unions. The experience of both the Commune of 1871 and of Hungary, he said, had shown that the revolution could only avoid defeat if the organisation of the economy rested on the trade unions.

403 Our knowledge of the course of this plenum rests on the accounts given by Maurín on a number of later occasions, such as, for example, in the appendix 'Sobre el comunismo' to the new edition of the book he originally published in 1935, entitled *Revolución y Contrarrevolución en España*, Paris, 1966, pp. 241–89, here p. 255. (See also Meaker 1974, pp. 392–5).

404 The Spanish Communist Party had emerged from splits in the socialist party (the latter remained split into two parties until the end of 1921). It was possibly not accidental that it was already active in the regions that did not attend the plenum. The level of energy with which it claimed leadership over the CNT stood in an inverse ratio to its actual numerical strength. (See the quotations printed in Meaker 1974, p. 391).

a *putsch*, they said. Yet there is no reason either to doubt that the composition of the plenum had been arrived at in a legitimate fashion, given the general situation, or to suggest that the decision to participate in the Moscow congress did not correspond to the views of the overwhelming majority of the union's members at that point.⁴⁰⁵

Moreover, the mandate given to the delegation left no room for misunderstanding.⁴⁰⁶ All revolutionary tendencies should be gathered together in an international, it said. The trade-union international would have to be independent of the Comintern, but the two should co-operate closely. The need for a dictatorship of the proletariat during the period of transition was recognised, but it should of course normally be exercised by the trade unions. The headquarters of the RILU should be located in Moscow, because it was only there that the appropriate conditions were available. All in all, this mandate did not in any way go beyond the principles upheld by the CNT until then, and in addition it referred approvingly to the resolutions of the Berlin conference.⁴⁰⁷

The great distance which still separated Nin from his later Bolshevism is shown by a public controversy which broke out when the delegation was on its way to Moscow. Since only Ibáñez had a passport, they had already split

405 Maurín himself gave an account of the origins and composition of the plenum in the preface to his report on the delegation's stay in Russia ('La Delegación de la C.N.T. en Rusia', *La Lucha social*, no. 112, 27 May 1922). There are thorough discussions in Meaker (1974, p. 393) and Bar (1981, p. 615) of these accusations, which were already being raised in autumn 1921 by the anarchist camp. They both conclude that there was no real evidence of manipulation and that there is no reason to doubt the arguments of Nin and Maurín, who pointed to the difficult conditions at the time.

406 The five points of the mandate were printed in a statement issued by a section of the delegation, entitled 'Kampfgruf aus Spanien', in *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 20, 4 June 1921. There is also a summary of the mandate in Maurín's preface to his report (see the previous note).

407 It is true that the sharp disagreements in the CNT after the RILU congress were mainly sparked off by the question of whether the delegation had overstepped, or even gone against, its mandate in Moscow. This fact itself would lead one to assume, without the need for any great investigation, that, in view of the problems dealt with at the congress, the mandate was too general to allow every point to be covered with cast-iron formulations. On the other hand, the CNT delegation as a whole did not fail to articulate the positions of revolutionary syndicalism at the congress, as we shall see, and these stood in contradiction to the views of the Bolshevik leaders of the RILU. In fundamental terms, however, the opposition of the anarchists towards the attitude of the delegation in Moscow was founded on principles which differed from those of the revolutionary syndicalists around Nin and Maurín.

up in Spain so as to make it easier to travel illegally to Berlin, where they were supposed to be met by members of the Comintern apparatus.⁴⁰⁸ Nin and Maurín therefore arrived first in Paris, where they contacted the editors of *La Vie Ouvrière*. They also met Souchy there (and he, ironically, provided them with the financial means to proceed on their way).⁴⁰⁹ Monatte then organised their further journey to Berlin. There they were accommodated by the FAUD, had long discussions with Rocker, and were shown round the city by Theodor Plivier.⁴¹⁰

But in Berlin, they were also surprised to learn that Arlandis and Leval, who had travelled separately, and apparently had not been in contact with the FAUD, together with a further CNT representative, León Xifort, had gone public with an appeal to FAUD members in the KPD press.⁴¹¹ In this document they stated that the basis on which the CNT had sent a delegation to Moscow was to establish a 'revolutionary united front' in the trade-union international. They claimed that the FAUD leaders were preparing to pursue a policy of

408 See Maurín's later description of these events (1966, pp. 256–7).

409 In his memoirs, Souchy writes that he gave them the money the Swedish syndicalists had collected for the persecuted Spanish anarchists. 'Thirty years later I saw Maurín again in New York. "I remember you well" he said. "You helped us out of a tight corner, when we had come from Barcelona to Paris and didn't know how we could get hold of the money to travel on to Moscow". I was perplexed. They were naturally very keen to see the Russian Revolution at work, as I had been the year before. But to use the money collected for the support of persecuted comrades to make a trip to Russia – this is something I could never have brought myself to do. They perhaps took the view that the money was meant for the CNT in general. This is the only way I could explain their *faux pas*, and the unaffected way in which Maurín brought the matter up' (Souchy 1985, pp. 59–60).

410 His long article 'Aus der spanischen Arbeiterbewegung', in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 28, 1921, was doubtless based on information given him by Nin and Maurín.

411 'Kampftruf aus Spanien', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 20, 4 June 1921. This document was apparently regarded as so important that some weeks later it was again reported in detail ('An die deutschen Syndikalist', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 23, 25 June 1921). Xifort had signed as representative of the CNT in France, and he travelled to Moscow 'on his own account' (according to a representative of the CNT, writing in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 32, 1921). When in France, Arlandis had invited him to accompany him on the journey so as to have a replacement if any of the elected delegates was unable to get through. Apart from this, he also offered Xifort a mandate from the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Monde*, which had been given to him (because he thought this organisation should be represented by a delegate of its own at the congress). (Cf. Xavier Paniagua, 'Las repercusiones de la revolución rusa en el movimiento libertario español', *Anales del Centro de Alzira de la UNED*, no. 1, 1980, pp. 61–88, here p. 83).

obstruction at the Moscow trade-union congress. The FAUD leaders, they said, were playing into the hands of the Social Democrats by publishing attacks on the communists. The members of the FAUD were asked to make sure that there was no split in the forces of revolution, and to enforce the participation of that organisation in the Moscow congress. This appeal, which Arlandis had even signed 'on behalf of the Moscow delegation', called forth an immediate reaction from the other CNT delegates. Nin, as secretary of the CNT, presented the official position of the organisation in *Der Syndikalist*.⁴¹² Even though the CNT was not 'in absolute agreement with Moscow', they wanted to go to the congress in order to unite all revolutionary forces and to ensure that the principles of syndicalism were taken into account when this happened. The dictatorship of the proletariat must have the trade unions as its basis. But he also expressed his firm expectation that they would be able to cooperate with the FAUD.

Nin's declaration was no more compatible with the FAUD's approach than Arlandis's appeal, since it defended the idea of participating in the Moscow congress, while the FAUD rejected it. But it was welcomed by Fritz Kater of the FAUD Executive Committee, above all because it marked the failure of a manoeuvre by the KPD, which had instigated Arlandis's appeal.⁴¹³ It is now no longer possible to clarify what really lay behind this, whether it was part of a plan to construct a faction within the FAUD, or whether it was merely the result of a sudden inspiration on the part of the signatories, who unlike Nin and Maurín had probably received accommodation from the KPD while they were in Berlin.

In any case, this whole dispute was nothing but an episode. It seems to have evoked no response in Spain, even though Nin's declaration was reproduced both in *Lucha social*, which was then the sole legal CNT paper, and in the organ of the Spanish communist party, which came out in Madrid.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, the signatories of Arlandis's appeal went in completely different directions after the Moscow congress. Leval and Xifort became emphatic opponents of the RILU, whereas Arlandis, after an initial period of fierce opposition at the Moscow congress, became its equally emphatic advocate. The dispute over this appeal could not therefore be easily exploited in the course of any factional confrontation over the CNT's relationship to the RILU.⁴¹⁵ The FAUD alone would

⁴¹² 'Die revolutionären Syndikalisten Spaniens und die Internationale', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 23, 1921.

⁴¹³ 'Wie es um den Aufruf der Spanier an die deutschen Syndikalisten steht?', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 26, 1921.

⁴¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, and *Lucha social*, no. 73, 11 June 1921.

⁴¹⁵ The incident is mentioned neither by Bar nor by Meaker. Since both of these studies are

again revert to this affair, which had almost been forgotten in the meantime. After the RILU congress, it published a statement by a representative of the CNT in France, dealing with the events surrounding the founding congress, in which the behaviour of Arlandis and Xifort in Berlin was condemned.⁴¹⁶ The incident in Berlin did not prevent the Spanish delegates from taking the route across the Baltic Sea from Stettin to Estonia and then proceeding by land from there to reach Russia.⁴¹⁷ They arrived in Moscow in the middle of June, in good time to take part in the preparatory discussions.

Thus the CNT appeared to offer an image of unanimity on the question of 'Moscow' in the spring of 1921. The NAS presented a very different picture. It was in closer contact with the other syndicalist organisations of Europe. They were also much better supplied with information about Soviet Russia in the Netherlands than in Spain. Moreover, the NAS had been confronted at close quarters with the political issues at stake when it took part in the Berlin conference. The differences in approach between the two NAS delegates at Berlin foreshadowed the split that would later develop in that organisation over the question of joining the RILU.

Even before the Berlin conference there had been a dispute within the NAS over the choice of one of the two delegates. Objections were raised against sending Bouwman as a delegate to Berlin, on the grounds that as a member of the communist party he could not properly represent the interests of the NAS.⁴¹⁸ While he was in Berlin, his voting record showed that he stuck loyally to its prior decisions, and, as he explained, it was for that reason that he could not vote for Belen'ky's ideas. Afterwards, however, when he reported on the conference in the NAS organ, his remarks triggered off a fierce debate.⁴¹⁹ Nevertheless, in January an enlarged meeting of the NAS leadership decided to take part in the Moscow congress and to send a five-strong delegation.⁴²⁰ But the campaign by the critics of Moscow, led by Lansink, who was a member of the syndicalist information bureau, started to gain strength. Some weeks later, the NAS executive decided on financial grounds to send only three delegates.

based on a thorough examination of the press of the Spanish left, this would tend to show that no one there attached any weight to it.

416 'Eine Erklärung spanischer Arbeiter zu dem Manifest ihrer Delegierten an die deutschen Syndikalist', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 32, 1921.

417 Some notes on the journey by Maurín can be found in issues of *Lucha social*, for example no. 74, 18 June 1921 and no. 80, 3 July 1921.

418 Thorpe 1989, pp. 172 and 300.

419 Thorpe 1989, p. 172. Bouwman's article was republished several times. Cf. note 12.

420 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, p. 42.

Lansink had originally been chosen as one of the five delegates. He now withdrew, along with one other person. This of course had a direct impact on the political position of the delegation as a whole, since the three remaining members, Bouwman among them, were all supporters of the RILU.⁴²¹

Other conflicts played their part too. In December, Belen'ky also visited the Netherlands. When he was there, he had some discussions with ITS leaders, including Fimmen, the secretary of the ITF, and Stenhuis the secretary of the Factory Workers' Federation (cf. section 9 of this chapter). He also negotiated with the NAS. In this way, the ITUC gained precise information at first hand, which was not the case for many other countries. An important result of the connections established by Belen'ky was the publication, starting in March, of a fortnightly information bulletin (which paralleled the one issued by the ITUC's Berlin bureau). This development also had a bearing on the NAS. There were three editors, two of whom were communist party members. The third, however, was a member of the NAS, and he was in turn one of the delegates who were to be sent to Moscow.⁴²²

At the end of April, the ITUC addressed itself directly to the membership of the NAS by sending an 'Open Letter' in which it attacked Lansink's campaign. He was accused of having sabotaged the Berlin decision that all syndicalists should go to the Moscow congress, and the ITUC warned that his activities would inevitably lead to an attempt to set up a third, syndicalist, trade-union international. There was no longer any room for such an organisation, it added.⁴²³

In its report to the founding congress of the RILU, the International Trade Union Council indicated what the consequence of such a development would be in the Netherlands: 'The ITUC would have to depend exclusively on the communist party of the country in its further work ... in order to exert its organisational influence on the old trade unions'.⁴²⁴ This was a veiled announcement of a re-orientation in trade-union tactics, because the communist party had tended in the meantime to place the main emphasis of its fractional work on the national trade-union centre, which was under social-democratic leadership (in the future this would open a fresh field of conflict).

But the question of the attitude of the NAS was still far from decided. In view of the strong presence in it of communist forces oriented towards the

421 Thorpe 1989, p. 173.

422 Thorpe 1989, p. 173 and *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, p. 42.

423 'An alle im "Holländischen Arbeitersekretariat" vereinigten holländischen Arbeiter', *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, pp. 175–80.

424 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, p. 42.

RILU, a prospect began to emerge against which a member of the NAS executive had already warned in mid-March: there could well be a split.⁴²⁵ Whether this happened would ultimately depend on the result of the Moscow congress, but it appeared almost unavoidable, considering the level of confrontation already reached within the organisation.

In the case of the British Shop Stewards' Movement, events took a very different course. On account of its unique structure as a propaganda society of a syndicalist character, active within a broad trade-union movement which was oriented towards reformism, it could not risk a split, as it would then become an isolated sect. After the confrontations at the Second Comintern Congress and the movement's initial refusal to take part in the ITUC, a compromise had been arrived at in August 1920. Murphy had remained in Moscow as the Shop Stewards' representative, and at the end of August he started to take part in the work of the ITUC, and he continued to do so until his temporary return to Britain in November.

The National Administrative Council (NAC) of the Shop Stewards' Movement met between 25–28 September. At this meeting, participated in by Tanner and Ramsay, two of its Moscow delegates, it approved the decision to join the ITUC and confirmed Murphy's position as its representative.⁴²⁶ After all, the Shop Stewards' Movement was also one of the group of organisations involved in preparing to found a communist party. Many of its members, in particular its leading public representatives, were already active in one or other of the various parties which were participating in the move towards communist unity. In order to avoid double representation and to define their field of activity more precisely, it was decided at this meeting that the members of the Shop Stewards' Movement should be subject as individuals to the discipline of the communist party. But as organisations, it was decided, the 'Shop Stewards and Workers Committees [would] come under the discipline of the Red International of Labour Unions'.⁴²⁷ This rule ensured that they had a degree of independence from the party. Moreover, in a letter from Moscow, Murphy recommended the registration of all members, so as to determine who was an 'ordinary' member and who already belonged to a political party.⁴²⁸

425 Thorpe 1989, p. 173.

426 'Report of the NAC Meeting of September 25th–28th, 1920' (Tanner Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford, Box 5 Folder 3). See also Streiter 1982, pp. 175–6.

427 'Relationship of the Shop Stewards and Workers Committees to the Communist Party' (Tanner Papers, Nuffield College, Oxford, Box 5 Folder 3). See also Streiter 1982, p. 176.

428 Streiter 1982, p. 175. This recommendation went back to the discussion which took place in

The further activities of the Shop Stewards' Movement therefore took place in both the political and the industrial spheres, but its general support of the principles of the Communist International was unambiguous. This was demonstrated by the way Tanner voted at the Berlin syndicalist conference, something the FAUD organ *Der Syndikalist* later remarked on critically.⁴²⁹ Representatives of the Shop Stewards' NAC took part in the negotiations of December 1920 and January 1921 between the different communist groups.⁴³⁰ These led to the congress of 30–31 January 1921 in Leeds, which founded a unified communist party. Tanner was the president of the congress. Murphy greeted him in the name of the Shop Stewards and declared that their organisation had played a positive role in the unification negotiations, but in view of its character it could not participate officially in the founding of the party.⁴³¹

Already on the eve of this congress, a conference of the Shop Stewards' Movement had appointed a committee to negotiate with the communist party over the future relationship between the two organisations.⁴³² At a meeting on 23 February, they agreed on a resolution affirming both the leading role of the party and the need for an 'unofficial industrial movement'. The aims of this movement would be to transform the trade unions into industrial unions, turn economic struggles into revolutionary struggles and finally get the trade unions to join the 'Red International'.⁴³³ With this decision, the Shop Stewards' Movement gave up its character as an independent revolutionary movement and became a left trade-union tendency controlled by the communist party.

This position was confirmed at a conference of the various oppositional trade-union groups influenced by the Shop Stewards' Movement which was held in Sheffield from 31 March to 3 April 1921. The conference noted that the

the ECCI in August. (Cf. M.K. 'Der erste Monat der Arbeit', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 13, 1920, pp. 271–6, here pp. 274–5).

429 M.W. 'Moskau und der Syndikalismus', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 7, 1921.

430 Streiter 1982, pp. 179–80.

431 Klugman 1968, p. 68. To what extent Tanner became a member of the new party by participating in the Leeds congress remains unclear. If he did, it was only for a short time. (Cf. Streiter 1982, p. 182). Murphy was both a member of the Shop Stewards' Movement and an official representative of the ITUC, and he called on the Leeds congress to support the forthcoming Moscow trade-union congress, to which the congress responded by passing a special resolution (see Streiter 1982, p. 197, and 'Die Konferenz der Kommunistischen Parteien in England', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921).

432 On the discussions of the Shop Stewards before the Leeds unification congress, see 'Bericht über die Lage der Shop-Stewards-Bewegung in England', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 17, 1921, pp. 342–5.

433 Macfarlane 1966, pp. 110–11 and Streiter 1982, p. 181.

economic downturn of 1920 had greatly weakened the trade-union movement and it countered this by laying the foundation for new opposition structures on the basis of industrial branches. A new name was also adopted: the Shop Stewards' Movement now became the National Workers' Committee Movement.⁴³⁴

But this was not the only structure within which the opposition within the trade unions would be organised. There was also the British Bureau of the ITUC, formed in December after Murphy's return from Russia. Its job was to spread propaganda, and to canvass for the widest possible British representation at the Moscow congress. It had initially to fall back on the two newspapers of the Shop Stewards' Movement as its publicity organs, but it immediately started to create an extensive organisational structure, established district committees and district organisers and organised regional conferences, such as the well-attended conference of 7 May for the London Region. These conferences were intended to promote discussions of the Red International of Labour Unions and carry out the election of delegates. This comparatively large amount of organisation was no doubt possible because Murphy had brought back sufficient funds from Moscow, but it bore hardly any relation to the actual number of members involved, and was criticised by the ITUC for this reason.⁴³⁵

It may be that the creation of a dual structure of this kind was purely a result of the fact that the attention of the CPGB was entirely occupied in the first few months of 1921 by the strike movement among the miners.⁴³⁶ The strike failed because on Friday 15 April ('Black Friday') the transport and railway unions, which had joined together with the Miners' Federation in the Triple Alliance, shrank back from engaging in a solidarity strike. (Even though the miners were defeated on this occasion, the mining crisis had by no means been solved. It would finally come to a head in the strike of 1926). One result of 'Black Friday' was the expulsion of Robert Williams from the communist party, since as secretary of the Transport Workers' Federation he had failed in his duty of solidarity with the miners, thus betraying the movement. With this, the party lost its most prominent and influential trade-union leader.⁴³⁷

434 Streiter 1982, pp. 191–2; Macfarlane 1966, pp. 113–14; Martin 1969, pp. 19–20.

435 *Bericht des Internationale Rates*, pp. 65–7; Streiter 1982, pp. 195–9; Klugman 1968, vol. 1, pp. 108–12. There is a description of the activities of the British Bureau in Murphy 1941, pp. 167–8.

436 This is the view Streiter takes in his thesis (Streiter 1982, p. 199). There is an account of the strike and its results there (Streiter 1982, pp. 199–209).

437 Williams defended himself in a pamphlet distributed by the ITF: Robert Williams, *The British Transport Workers' Federation and the Triple Alliance*, Amsterdam, undated. For the communist position on these events, see, for example, Charles T. Hallinan, 'The Triple

Not until June 1922 did the National Workers' Committee Movement (formerly the Shop Stewards' Movement) and the British Bureau of the RILU join together to lay the foundation for what was to become the Minority Movement. But the attitude of the Shop Stewards was in any case clear, as was shown in the preparations for the founding congress of the RILU. As they said in the message they sent to the IWW conference in May 1921, 'to fail to respond to the call of the Red International would mean to fail to show loyalty towards the workers of Russia'.⁴³⁸

In Latin America, it was above all from Argentina that support had come for attempts to organise syndicalism internationally before the world war. As a continuation of this, they spoke out from the very beginning in favour of co-operation with Moscow. The tone was set by the anarchist FORA-V. Congress (though the syndicalist FORA-IX. Congress was still affiliated to the IFTU). It appointed Tom Barker to represent it in Europe. As an expression of its solidarity with the Russian Revolution, and certainly also as a way of stealing a march on the FORA-IX. Congress, it called a special congress at the beginning of October 1920 at which it changed its name. It now called itself FORA-C, in other words FORA-Comunista. While affirming its solidarity with the Russian Revolution, it also naturally stressed the special role the anarchists had played in it, and it called for the creation of a revolutionary trade-union international in the tradition of the First International. Nothing was said of the antagonism between the anarchists and the Bolsheviks in Russia; this was perhaps not yet very well-known in Latin America.⁴³⁹

Barker, having taken part in the Berlin conference, then travelled on to Russia, where most of his efforts were directed towards creating an international

Alliance Backs Down', *Liberator*, no. 6, June 1921, pp. 9–12. Ken Coates and Tony Topham, in their history of the British Transport Workers' Union, have examined in detail whether Williams really 'sabotaged' the movement or acted as he did because he had no other choice, under the given circumstances, in view of the split in the Miners' Federation executive and against the background of the mass unemployment brought about by the economic crisis (Coates and Topham 1994, pp. 777–86). They come down in favour of the latter interpretation. His expulsion had serious consequences for the party: 'It removed the main channel through which the communists might have been able to turn the organisations of the transport workers communist' (p. 847). Williams's star now began to sink in the transport workers' movement. By the next year, at the latest, when the TGWU was formed, he was pushed out by Ernest Bevin, who was a much more moderate trade unionist.

438 'High Spots of the Thirteenth I.W.W. Convention', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 6, July 1921, pp. 38–41, here p. 40.

439 Abad de Santillán 1971, pp. 252–6; López 1987, vol. 1, pp. 121–6.

seamen's union, in association with the ITUC and the Russian seamen's union (cf. section 9 of this chapter). Then, early in 1921, he received precise instructions from the FORA – C. about his mandate for the foundation congress of the RILU. He was not to announce its definitive affiliation, and he must support the autonomy of the RILU vis-à-vis the Comintern. The new trade-union international must be anti-state and anti-political, and it must carry on the traditions of anarcho-communism. Its headquarters should be located outside Russia, so as to maintain its independence.⁴⁴⁰ It was clearly apparent that Barker's instructions could not be harmonised with the ideas put forward by the Bolsheviks.

The syndicalist FORA-IX Congress was a member of the IFTU; but it too was affected by the question of affiliation to the RILU. One reason was that the Argentine communist party, which had emerged from a split in the socialist party, was active in the ranks of the FORA-IX Congress. At the latter's eleventh congress, which took place at the beginning of February 1921, the question of international orientation was the subject of fierce altercations between syndicalists, socialists and communists. The congress finally abandoned the idea of voting on the issue, and decided to postpone a decision until the next congress, and to hold a referendum. This meant that the union automatically remained within the IFTU. A few days after the end of the congress, five newly elected communist members of the union executive (*Consejo federal*) announced their resignation, on the grounds that they could not accept this decision.⁴⁴¹

The evolving dynamic of the situation was now altered by the entry of an additional element. The syndicalist FORA-IX congress accepted the plea for unity made by the FORA-C congress the previous October and issued a call for the establishment of a unity committee, to consist of representatives of both the FORAS and the independent trade unions. Achieving reunification, however, would be a much slower process than proclaiming unity. One of the reasons, and not the least important one, was that the initiators of the process, the anarchists, began to get cold feet, and most of them therefore kept out of the effort to reunify the movement.

The activities of the Brazilians were overshadowed by the Argentine discussions, but they too discussed the question of the international in the course of one of their repeated attempts to construct a national trade-union organisation (this organisation, the *Confederação Operária Brasileira*, had already been founded several times before). This was the 'Third Workers' Congress' held in

440 This document is printed in López 1987, vol. 2, pp. 161–2.

441 Marotta 1960, vol. 3, pp. 17–36; Oddone 1975, pp. 393–402.

Rio at the end of April 1920.⁴⁴² After Canelas's experiences the previous year, the Amsterdam option was no longer under discussion. But entry into the Communist International was also rejected, under anarchist influence, since it was not a trade-union international. They did, however, declare that they were in sympathy with it.

The Brazilians had very little information to go on, it should be said. Many anarchists described themselves as Bolsheviks, because the Russian Revolution was under attack by international capitalism. But by autumn 1920, the Executive Committee which emerged from the 'Third Congress' had already begun to raise questions about developments in Soviet Russia, since they did know by now that the trade unions were not the driving force. The winter of that year saw the arrival of the first information about the persecution of the anarchists, and this led to vehement polemics in the trade-union newspapers. Voices were also raised in defence of the Bolsheviks. These people naturally expressed their regret that it had turned out to be impossible to send a delegate to the foundation congress of the RILU. One of the advocates of Bolshevism wrote that Brazil was the only large nation which was not represented at the congress.⁴⁴³ (It was not possible to send a Brazilian representative to Moscow until the second RILU congress, and this was again Canelas. Meanwhile a communist party had been founded in March 1922 and the breach between the anarchists and the communists had become final).⁴⁴⁴

Further north, in Mexico, where at the beginning of 1921 the anarchists and communists joined together temporarily in a single trade-union federation, developments acquired a special character by the establishment there of a bureau of the ITUC (on this, see section 7 of this chapter). In Sweden, finally, the syndicalists managed with difficulty to reach the decision to go to Moscow and they elected three delegates to the founding congress, as Souchy informed the FAUD conference in March 1921.⁴⁴⁵

442 Cf. Dulles 1973, pp. 134–6, on the Third Workers' Congress. The congress also passed a resolution in favour of holding a congress of South American workers, and it condemned the Washington Labour Conference.

443 Dulles 1973, pp. 154–5, 158–61 and 164–6. It was characteristic of Brazil's isolation that the congress also thought that the IWW was the model for a revolutionary trade-union movement in capitalist countries, and that the RILU would be guided by it.

444 On the further development of the conflict within the Brazilian workers' movement between anarchists and communists on the question of establishing a national trade-union centre and affiliating to the RILU, which was of course a marginal issue for the latter, see Filho 1988, pp. 40–50, and Filho 1989, pp. 97–122.

445 *Der Syndikalist*, no. 11, 1921. On the international policy of the Swedish syndicalists, see the

With this, all the organisations which had participated in the Berlin conference, including the two which had been prevented from participating by the repression, with the sole exception of the FAUD, had now responded favourably to the call to attend the Moscow congress.⁴⁴⁶ The reasons for their willingness to attend varied considerably. In almost all cases there had been fierce disagreement over the decision. Resistance occurred above all where a syndicalist or 'industrialist' organisation was confronted by a communist party's claim to leadership, the more so if the syndicalist organisation in question contained organised anarchist currents. The conflict with the communist parties was both an aspect of ideological clarification and the expression of a struggle for organisational influence. Even so, the situation can be summed up in this way: all the syndicalists went to Moscow in the summer of 1921 with the declared intention of committing themselves to an independent revolutionary trade-union international, which would play an autonomous role and have equal rights vis-à-vis the international of the communist parties. A conflict with the Bolsheviks was therefore predetermined.

This conflict would undoubtedly have broken out even in the approach to the congress, if a greater amount of information had been available about the fate of the Russian syndicalists (and of the anarchists in general). In summer 1920, the Russian syndicalists had discussions with their Western European fellow-thinkers, such as Souchy, Pestaña, Borghi and Lepetit, who were in Moscow at that time. They gave them two documents. The first was a manifesto occasioned by the Russo-Polish war, in which they appealed for solidarity with the Russian Revolution but at the same time warned against imitating Bolshevik methods. The second gave extensive information on the situation in Russia and the persecution of the anarchists and other revolutionaries. Only the first document reached Western Europe. It was printed at the beginning of January 1921 in *Le Libéraire*.⁴⁴⁷

contribution by Lennart K. Persson, 'Amsterdam, Moskva eller Berlin? Syndikalisternas internationella organisationsproblematik före, under och efter första världskriget – reflekterad genom svenska SAC', in Persson 1981.

446 Some smaller syndicalist organisations, such as in Czechoslovakia, have had to remain outside our consideration here. On Portugal, whose representative only arrived after the end of the RILU congress, see chapter 5, section 2. The attitude to 'Moscow' of the organisations we have not treated here did not differ in principle from that of those we have examined.

447 Cf. Maximoff 1940, pp. 440–1. The document is printed on pp. 444–6. (The book in question is a collection of documents issued by a leading Russian anarcho-syndicalist émigré on the fate of the Russian anarchists. Maksimov gives a sketch of the period between the Second

After a fresh wave of arrests in October and November 1920, which took place in parallel with the overthrow of the Makhno movement in Ukraine,⁴⁴⁸ the Russian anarcho-syndicalists decided to send a protest directly to the communist party. They hoped to use the strongest political weapon the Russian anarchists had, namely a declaration of solidarity by Kropotkin. But the latter refused to sign the declaration, saying: 'It would be ridiculous ... to address a protest to the headquarters of the gendarmerie'.⁴⁴⁹

The anarcho-syndicalists then made an attempt to protest at a level which was, theoretically at least, higher than the Russian communist party. They wanted to appeal to the Comintern, through Rosmer, who still retained his prestige among the syndicalists. He met repeatedly with representatives of the Russian anarcho-syndicalists between November 1920 and February 1921, in order to discuss the draft of an appeal to that body. He pressed them to 'moderate' the text, in other words to refrain from attacks on the Bolsheviks and the Comintern, and in general to soften the polemical tone of the protest. The anarcho-syndicalists accepted this advice and also abandoned the idea of giving the protest a deadline within which it must be answered positively. Rosmer finally informed them, some time in February, that he had handed over the document and it had already been discussed once. But a decision had had to be postponed owing to the lack of a quorum. 'In the meantime', wrote Maksimov, 'things developed in quite a different way. A month later (on 8 March 1921) the answer was given by the Russian communist party instead of the Communist International'. A new wave of arrests after Kronstadt put a stop to any further attempts at reconciliation.⁴⁵⁰

Whatever supplementary points may be added to Maksimov's presentation of these events in the future by further research in the Russian archives,⁴⁵¹ one thing at least seems clear: Rosmer made an attempt to bring the two

Comintern Congress and the RILU foundation congress on pp. 440–4 of his work). On the general background, we would refer once more to Paul Avrich's standard work on the Russian anarchists.

448 On the Makhno movement, see the account by a participant, Peter Arshinov (1974 [1935]). See also Skirda (1985) and Dahlmann (1986).

449 Maximoff 1940, p. 441. The final version of the protest is printed on pp. 449–53.

450 Maximoff 1940, pp. 442–3. The document in its original sharply pointed version is printed on pp. 449–53.

451 Like Thorpe in his book *The Workers Themselves* (1989, pp. 167–9), we have followed the version Maksimov presumably wrote down shortly after his expulsion from Soviet Russia at the end of 1921. A similar detailed account by him, with documents, was published as early as 1924 by *Le Libéraire* (in the issues for 30 August, 31 August and 2 September 1924). Rosmer also mentions this attempt to reach an agreement between the anarchists and

sides together, which was accepted by the Bolshevik leadership. It was also not by chance that Rosmer spoke as the official representative of the Comintern at Kropotkin's burial in February 1921, which was organised by the various anarchist groups themselves to prevent the Bolshevik state from taking control of the occasion. It was the last significant public demonstration by the Russian anarchists, and the rest of the non-Bolshevik left also participated in it.⁴⁵² Serge, who was there as well, described both Rosmer's speech and that of the Bolshevik representative of the Soviet Central Executive Committee as 'conciliatory'.⁴⁵³

Yet if there had ever been any realistic chance of reconciliation with the Russian anarchists, or at least with their syndicalist wing, this ceased to be the case after the end of February 1921. The rising of the Kronstadt sailors brought the Bolshevik regime to the verge of collapse. After its bloody suppression – the Russian-American anarchists Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman made an unsuccessful attempt to mediate – the Bolsheviks had no other option but to make an economic about-turn by replacing the command economy of war communism with the New Economic Policy (on the one hand), and to secure their power by strengthening the dictatorship (on the other).

the Bolsheviks (Rosmer 1971, pp. 98–100). He had undertaken this on his own initiative, he said, but he had informed Trotsky and received his approval. He went on to write that the only meeting he had was a single one with Alexander Shapiro. Further meetings were called off. Rosmer considered that this was because of pressure from the 'individualist' anarchists. Maksimov's precise account, which was written down much closer to the date of the events than Rosmer's, is of course more convincing. Wayne Thorpe quarrels strongly with Rosmer's remark in his preface that his memories were 'so clear and so certain' that he could only have made 'tiny errors of detail' (Rosmer 1971, p. 10), but his sharp criticism of the latter (Thorpe 1989, p. 302) seems excessive, and leaves out of account the fact that, despite Rosmer's optimism, the three decades which passed by between the events and his decision to commit them to writing must inevitably have taken their toll. It will only be possible to achieve a genuinely comprehensive and detailed reconstruction of these negotiations on the basis of the relevant archive material.

452 Rosmer 1971, pp. 100–2. Cf. the documentation issued by the Russian anarchists on Kropotkin's burial and all the ceremonies around it, printed in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 17, 1921. Rosmer is presented there as the representative of the French syndicalists, while in later documentation he is described as speaking for the RILU. As he himself writes (Rosmer 1971, p. 102), the anarchists could not believe that he had been officially delegated by the Communist International. It must, however, also be added that because of his political past no speech by Rosmer could have had the significance that a speech by a Bolshevik leader would have done. This alone would have counted as an offer of reconciliation (assuming that any kind of political basis still existed for such a thing).

453 Serge 1963, p. 124.

As Lenin commented at the time in a private conversation: 'This is Thermidor. But we shan't let ourselves be guillotined! We shall make a Thermidor ourselves'.⁴⁵⁴

A new wave of repression now hit the anarchists as well as the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries. It also affected the anarcho-syndicalists, who had been treated relatively gently until then.⁴⁵⁵ In May, the Bolshevik Central Committee set the tone with a special circular to the party organisation: now that the counter-revolution from outside – the Whites – has been crushed, they said, the only counter-revolution left is the internal one. The anarchists play a special role in this, because they are conducting subversive activities in the factories and expressing their solidarity with the open counter-revolution. Soviet power is therefore compelled to 'impose considerable restrictions on their freedom of movement'.⁴⁵⁶ The new wave of arrests dramatically worsened the situation in the already overcrowded prisons. There was a series of hunger strikes,⁴⁵⁷ which did not have any great impact, since they remained almost unnoticed not only outside Russia but also within the country. They did, however, serve as a general rehearsal for the activities the anarchists would undertake during the founding congress of the RILU.

The Central Committee's May circular also maintained that there was a connection between these events and the argument within the Bolshevik Party about the role of the trade unions, which had broken out in autumn 1920 and, after bringing the party to the edge of open confrontation, had been brought to an end by the Tenth Party Congress in March 1921.⁴⁵⁸ It is not possible to present

454 Serge 1963, p. 131. In his memoirs (pp. 124–31), Serge describes in moving words the alarm and dismay with which the Kronstadt rising was greeted by him and his closest friends. (See also the description in Goldman 1931, vol. 2, pp. 872–86.) On Kronstadt in general, see Avrich 1970. See also Getzler 1983, where the stress is laid more on the background to the revolt. The accounts given by the Kronstadt rebels themselves are to be found in Kool and Oberländer 1967, pp. 282–515.

455 Avrich 1967, p. 263. See also the protest of the few anarcho-syndicalists still at liberty in Moscow, signed by Shapiro among others, to which a declaration of solidarity by Berkman and Goldman is attached, printed in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 18, 1921 and also in Maximoff 1940, pp. 468–70.

456 This circular is printed in Maximoff 1940, pp. 454–61.

457 There are further documents on this, also published in part in *Der Syndikalist*, in Maximoff 1940, pp. 461–8.

458 On the trade-union discussion, see Daniels 1962, pp. 148–68, and Schapiro 1955, pp. 273–95 and 314–20. Michael Reiman interprets the actions of Lenin and Zinoviev as a 'coup d'état' (Reiman 1987, pp. 41–53). A similar argument is put forward by Frederick Kaplan, who sees the battle between different positions on this issue as a conflict over the prerogatives of

the discussion in detail here, but it should be emphasised that the Workers' Opposition, which could count on support from some individual trade unions – above all the metalworkers – advocated the taking over of the economy by the unions, which it said should enjoy a considerable degree of independence from the party. This view was condemned as an 'anarcho-syndicalist deviation'. The May circular asserted that there was a close link between this 'deviation' and the anarchist movement, although in reality there was no such link. The Tenth Party Congress did, it is true, emphasise the formal independence of the trade unions, rejecting Trotsky's proposal for their 'governmentalisation'. This would also have removed them from the control of the party, which is why the party apparatus strongly opposed the idea. But it also emphasised the principle of political control by means of the Bolshevik fractions within the trade unions. This position, put forward by Lenin and Zinoviev, also found the support of trade-union leaders like Tomskey and Lozovsky.

News of the fresh wave of persecution which hit the anarchists early in 1921 only reached the international syndicalist movement in disconnected fragments, because the country was well screened from the outside world. (This situation would change immediately once the syndicalist delegates entered Russia). But the Bolsheviks' trade-union debate had been largely conducted in public, so information on this was far more available. Attentive observers such as the FAUD leaders found their views confirmed by the debate.⁴⁵⁹ *La Vie ouvrière*, on the other hand, printed an account of the debate from the Bolshevik point of view.⁴⁶⁰ During these months, most of the syndicalists were in fact still attracted by the aura surrounding the Bolshevik Revolution, and at best they gave only marginal attention to anything that might damage this aura. It was therefore with high expectations that they arrived in Moscow at various points in the months of May and June 1921.

the party apparatus (Kaplan 1969, pp. 287–95). Documents on the trade-union discussion have been printed by Mergner (1972) and Kool and Oberländer (1967).

459 See Rocker's comments in his closing speech at the FAUD conference in March (*Der Syndikalist*, no. 11, 1921), in which he passed in review the three main currents in the Bolshevik Party, expressing sympathy with the Workers' Opposition alone, though he also accused them of ultimately continuing to advocate centralist conceptions.

460 S. Preobrajensky, 'Les syndicats russes en face de l'organisation de la production', *La Vie ouvrière*, no. 95, 26 February 1921, and no. 96, 4 March 1921.

6.1 *The Levi Zentrale of the KPD and Syndicalism: Out of Tune with the Comintern*

On the eve of the Second Comintern Congress, the clash between the Comintern leadership and Paul Levi, supported by Radek and Serrati, over the admission of the syndicalists demonstrated that this step was not without its critics. The people who tried to oppose it were acting in part under the influence of the rejection of syndicalism in principle which had been a feature of the Second International. If they had really feared that the Comintern would make ideological concessions, however, the resolutions of the congress were calculated to soothe their anxiety. Even so, the question continued to have organisational consequences, for the Comintern persisted in its attempts to secure syndicalist support.

After the admission of the syndicalists, another conflict arose between Levi and the Comintern leaders, though this time it did not involve a difference of principle but rather the problem of the KAPD. The KAPD delegates had initially decided to boycott the Second Comintern Congress when they saw the text of its proposed resolutions. After their return to Germany, serious conflicts broke out in the party, leading to several further splits. A majority of the KAPD leadership continued to aim for membership of the Comintern, and they therefore sent a new delegation to Russia in November 1920. Lengthy negotiations resulted at the beginning of December in a decision by the ECCI to admit the KAPD as a sympathising party. This did not in any sense mean that political or ideological concessions had been made to the 'ultra-left'; the ECCI again declared its fundamental rejection of the KAPD's politics. It justified the decision to admit the party by claiming that this would help to win back its 'proletarian basis' for communism.⁴⁶¹

Completely misunderstanding the situation, the KAPD was delighted by this decision to admit it to the Comintern. It thought it signified an impending change of course, as it said in a report on the results of its delegation to Russia. The almost simultaneous acceptance of the Gelsenkirchen Union into the ITUC was taken as another sign that 'the Third International is getting ready to follow the road marked out by the principles of the K.A.P.D.'. Particular significance was ascribed to the future Red International of Trade Unions. Only the name of the organisation was criticised, because the term 'trade unions'

⁴⁶¹ On the attempt made by the Comintern leadership in the winter of 1920–1 to win back the KAPD, and the subsequent protests of the KPD against this, cf. Goldbach 1973, pp. 62–4 and 78–9; Reisberg 1971, vol. 1, pp. 76–8; and Bock 1993, pp. 257–9. The ECCI's discussions of 24 and 28 November 1920 on the admission of the KAPD are documented in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, pp. 411–16. See also the remarks in Rosmer 1971, pp. 96–7.

had been used. The AAU (General Workers' Union), the 'factory organisation' of the KAPD, as well as the syndicalists, would participate in the RILU, as had been decided at the Berlin conference and so it was precisely the RILU that would be of 'the greatest assistance' in putting into effect the ideas of the KAPD. The party also had high hopes of receiving assistance from the Workers' Opposition in Russia, which turned out to be unrealistic.⁴⁶² The assertion was even made at the KAPD party congress in mid-February, in which the conclusions to be drawn from the party's admission to the Comintern were at the centre of the discussions, that it was precisely the connection with the RILU of the trade unions led by the Workers' Opposition that opened much more favourable possibilities than the KAPD had in the 'party-international' of the Comintern.⁴⁶³

In its invitation to elect delegates to the Moscow congress, the organ of the Berlin Bureau of the ITUC – in the same document in which the FAUD had been told not to elect Rocker or Kater – had included a section on the AAU. In this, it wrote that the AAU should only send delegates 'who unreservedly recognise the unified revolutionary front in the trade unions'.⁴⁶⁴ As early as December 1920, the AAU, in association with the KAPD, declared its membership of the Comintern. This was followed up at a conference in May by the election of a delegation to the founding congress of the RILU, not without opposition.⁴⁶⁵ The AAU did not of course make any concessions in the programme its delegation

462 'Delegation nach Russland', *Proletarier*, no. 3, December 1920–January 1921, pp. 5–12, here pp. 9, 11. The belief that the Bolsheviks were in the course of rethinking their position precisely on the trade-union question is all the more grotesque given that both Zinoviev and Lozovsky had explicitly emphasised during the ECCI discussions that the standpoint of the KAPD on this was 'completely incorrect'. (Cf. *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, pp. 413 and 415). Despite this, the KAPD press stubbornly asserted that Lenin too would now take a more positive attitude towards the syndicalist unions. The KPD had no trouble in countering assertions like this with quotations from Moscow publications in which the need for communists to work in the reformist trade unions was emphasised ('KAPD und Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Der Kommunistischer Gewerkschafter*, no. 1, 8 January 1921).

463 *Protokoll des ausserordentlichen Parteitages der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands vom 15.–18. Februar 1921 im Volkshaus zu Gotha*, edited by Clemens Klockner, Darmstadt, 1984, p. 132.

464 'An die revolutionären Arbeiter und Angestellten in den Gewerkschaften, Syndikaten und Unionen!', *Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 1, 15 January 1920. The opposition minority at the KAPD congress used this document as a further argument against going to Moscow. (See *Protokoll des ausserordentlichen Parteitages* 1984, pp. 164–5).

465 Bock 1993, p. 204.

had to uphold. The slogan 'Get Out of the Trade Unions!' would continue to be its central feature.⁴⁶⁶

This development inevitably aroused extreme apprehension on the part of the KPD leadership, and Levi in particular. The narrow organisational problem of the admission of the KAPD now expanded into a general conflict over relations with the syndicalists and the industrial unionists. Levi perhaps feared, given the background of his dispute with the Comintern on the eve of the Second Congress, that this actually did indicate that a change of course was in the offing, and thus that there was some justification for the KAPD's assertions and optimistic expectations; at the very least, this step by the Comintern would exert a negative political influence on the formation of a mass communist party, which had just been achieved through the merger with the Left USPD. After all, the main emphasis of the new United Communist Party of Germany (VKPD)⁴⁶⁷ undoubtedly rested on work in the trade unions, and first and foremost the Metalworkers' Union (DMV).⁴⁶⁸

The decision to admit the KAPD was evidently not yet known when the Unification Congress was held; at least, the problem was not discussed there. The question of the Gelsenkirchen Union was discussed, but only in passing. In any case, it was very different in character from the other industrial unions, and the KPD made efforts to keep in close contact with it, which were not controversial.⁴⁶⁹ (See below for further developments in this area).

When the VKPD leaders finally found out about the ECCI's decision – at first 'only unofficially and through announcements in the newspapers of the KAPD', which must have poisoned the atmosphere still further, even if it was presumably nothing more than a result of the bad state of communications between Berlin and Moscow – they immediately protested in an Open Letter signed

466 'Richtlinien zur Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Proletarier*, no. 7, June 1921, p. 16.

467 This was the official name of the party from the Unification Congress in December 1920 until the next party congress in August 1921.

468 Cf. for example Paul Levi's comments in December 1920: 'Work specifically in the trade unions will be the central point of all communist activity in the coming months. This work cannot be performed without a clear definition of both the means of activity and its goal' (Paul Levi, 'Eine unhaltbare Situation', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 268, 24 December 1920). See also Peter von Oertzen's acute comments on the impact on the party's internal dynamics of successfully acquiring a large layer of USPD trade unionists with experience in the Workers' Council movement (Von Oertzen 1976, pp. 222–7).

469 Cf. the tenor of the trade-union discussion, as reported in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Vereinigungsparteitages*, 1921, pp. 155–90. The resolution on the trade-union question is on pp. 254–61.

by both party chairmen.⁴⁷⁰ Explicitly this letter was directed only against the decision to admit the KAPD, but implicitly it raised the whole question of the Comintern's relationship to the syndicalists and industrial unionists. This link between the concrete problem of the KAPD and the general endeavours of the Comintern to win over the syndicalists was also underlined in the reply to the VKPD protest, which was presumably composed by Radek, who had been living illegally in Berlin since autumn 1920: 'For us communists, these [syndicalist] workers are our comrades in struggle, who are still taking the wrong route to reach the goal today, but tomorrow will fight shoulder to shoulder with us, made wiser and more open to our way of thinking by fresh experiences'.⁴⁷¹

Radek took part in a meeting of the VKPD *Zentrale* on 28 January 1921, at which he brought out the organisational consequences of the Comintern's attitude to the question: 'Our relationship with the syndicalists is clear at the international level. We shall not be able to get anywhere without having a connection with the French syndicalists, the American syndicalists and the Shop Stewards ... This left wing must therefore be brought in. But because these trade unions are still unclear, we said to ourselves, we shall set up a trade union Zimmerwald. It is not the communist international, but a transitional stage to it'. Even so, he admitted that there were possible dangers: 'We must make sure that the work in the trade unions is not spoiled, but on the other hand we must not set ourselves against industrial unionism'.

In his reply, Levi complained that the advances of the ECCI towards the syndicalists – and he also explicitly referred to the activities of Belen'ky in Germany – had come at the precise moment when the VKPD wanted to establish its mass influence firmly in the trade unions. 'In short, this is a difficult situation which has arisen from the fact that the Executive believes the most important

470 'An das Exekutivkomitee der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 270, 28 December 1920. The ECCI's resolution had arrived the previous evening, and the same issue of the newspaper was now able to give its full text.

471 'Die Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale und die KAPD', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 271, 29 December 1920. It is not without irony that the official attitude of the ECCI toward the KAPD was now emphatically defended by Radek himself, who had joined in alliance with Levi before the Second Comintern Congress to reject any closer co-operation with the syndicalists, a line of approach for which he would later be harshly criticised at the Ninth Party Conference (see the next chapter). Levi perhaps continued to regard him as an ally on this question, but Radek had clearly conformed to the views of the majority in the meantime. The ECCI itself rejected the protest of the VKPD leadership at a meeting on 14 January 1921. (Cf. the report on the discussion in *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, pp. 431–3).

objective is to get into an organisational relationship with non-communist elements, instead of endeavouring to find a political relationship with them'. In making this point, he was supported by other VKPD leaders. Wilhelm Koenen declared that the attempt to create a trade union 'Zimmerwald' from Moscow was 'nonsense', and Heinrich Brandler concurred with Levi's evaluation of the syndicalists and industrial unionists as an ultimately insignificant force in Germany.⁴⁷²

Proceeding from this critique of Moscow's actions, which had now extended far beyond the problem of the KAPD, the KPD *Zentrale* now defined its attitude towards the ITUC in a special resolution. Although it conceded the ITUC's right to establish 'connections with syndicalist and other similar organisations' on the international level, in the struggle against Amsterdam, this had to be combined at the same time with a determined fight against any kind of propaganda for withdrawing from the trade unions. The criticism by the *Zentrale* was concentrated exclusively on the German situation: the unconditional admission of syndicalists and unionists had the effect that the RILU appeared there 'as a splitter of the trade unions'. 'The VKPD can therefore only agree to the admission of the "Workers' Unions" in Germany insofar as they contain elements which have already split off before the foundation of the RILU, and have expressly ceased to propagate the idea of leaving the trade unions. These elements should be joined together with the workers organised in the trade unions so that they again form a unified group'. The KPD demanded a right of veto over the future admission of organisations from Germany.⁴⁷³

In a leading article that accompanied the resolution in *Die Rote Fahne*, Levi accused the ECCI of completely misconceiving the attitude of the syndicalists in Germany. This would have far more serious consequences than the admission of the KAPD into the Comintern, for the communist party was now involved in the most strenuous struggle it had ever had to conduct in the trade unions.⁴⁷⁴ This was, among other things, a reference to the conflicts which had broken out over the election of delegates to the Moscow trade-union congress, which the KPD was encouraging.

In the meantime, other questions had now become superimposed on this difference of opinion with the Comintern, in particular the way the split in the Italian socialist party at its Livorno congress in January 1921 had been handled

472 The minutes of this meeting are in the *Nachlass Levi*, Folder 182, Friedrich Engels Stiftung.

473 'Unsere Stellung zum Internationalen Rat der Gewerkschaften', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 59, 5 February 1921. Also published in *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 6, 12 February 1921.

474 Paul Levi, 'Wir und die Exekutive. 1.', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 59, 5 February 1921.

and in general relations between the Comintern headquarters in Moscow and its member parties outside Russia, which is something we cannot deal with in more detail in the present work. Even so, when a member of the KPD *Zentrale*, Curt Geyer, was sent to Moscow in the middle of February, in addition to his other instructions he was also mandated to defend the party's position on the trade-union question to the ECCI.⁴⁷⁵

He read out the resolution of the KPD *Zentrale* to the ECCI's next meeting, on 22/23 February 1921, and this was greeted by Tomskey with the accusation that the KPD had now fallen into the opposite error to that of the KAPD. Whereas the latter was agitating for withdrawal from the trade unions, the former wanted to keep the industrial unions out of the RILU. Zinoviev declared, in similar fashion, that the Third International needed syndicalists and industrial unionists 'from all countries and could not make an exception for Germany. If the admission of the industrial unionists was made to depend on the consent of the KPD, as was demanded, this would mean "national federalism" but there would not be an international'.⁴⁷⁶ The Executive wanted to present its point of view to the KPD in writing. But this letter was not written. As Geyer assumed in retrospect, the reason for this was perhaps 'that the ECCI's line on the trade union question was by no means settled, and the organisational relationship between it and the Red Trade Union Council had not yet been clarified in practice'.⁴⁷⁷

The ZA (Central Commission) of the VKPD, which was the highest party instance between congresses, was meeting at almost the same time as the ECCI, between 22–24 February. The conflict around Levi on account of the Italian question came to a head at this meeting, and when he was put in a minority on the subject it finally led to his resignation, in which he was joined by a number of his supporters. The question of the syndicalists and industrial unionists was

475 'Geyer was instructed, first of all to defend the *Zentrale's* resolutions on the Italian question, then on the question of the KAPD and on the trade union question. He was also instructed to introduce proposals by the KPD *Zentrale* for improving the way the connection between the ECCI and the individual sections of the Communist International was organised. Since he entirely adopted Levi's standpoint, he immediately came into sharp conflict with the leading members of the Executive' (Reisberg 1971, vol. 2, p. 707). As a supporter of Levi, he resigned from his position as representative in Moscow after Levi's own resignation as party leader, and travelled back to Germany. His stay in Moscow lasted from 21 February to 7 April 1921 (see his letter of 21/22 April in *Nachlass Levi*, Folder 182, Friedrich Engels Stiftung).

476 On Geyer's return to Germany, his notes on this session of the ECCI were confiscated by the German authorities. They are printed in Goldbach 1973, pp. 135–43.

477 Quoted from his letter of 21/22 April.

also dealt with in passing at the same meeting (*Die Rote Fahne* had devoted a lengthy article to this question on the opening day of the session).⁴⁷⁸ There was little disagreement about this point of the agenda, and the *Zentrale's* resolution of 28 January was confirmed.⁴⁷⁹

The ITUC summarised the situation that had been reached at the end of February, after receiving a detailed report from Belen'ky. He had had further discussions in Germany, including one meeting with the Gelsenkirchen Union. It would not be wrong to assume that he was the representative of the ITUC whose meeting with the AAU was the subject of an article in the KPD press.⁴⁸⁰ These meetings had made it clear that the points of view of the two groups – the 'trade union destroyers' and the 'trade union conquerors' – were completely incompatible with each other. The admission of the AAU to the ITUC, even as a sympathising organisation, was accordingly impossible.

The ITUC now sharply rejected the ideas put forward by the KAPD, but the resolution it passed had a different emphasis from that of the KPD.⁴⁸¹ It continued to insist that efforts should be made to induce as many of the industrial unionists as possible to join the future trade-union international. At the same time, it again explicitly confirmed that the Berlin Bureau was a 'branch' of the ITUC, and that the trade-union organisations were responsible solely to it. The KPD could of course send an official representative, if it regarded this as necessary, but it would not have voting rights. The KPD's claim to a right of veto over the admission of German trade-union organisations was rejected. This was a matter that could only be decided by the ITUC or its official representative in Berlin.

A letter sent by the ITUC at the end of March to its Berlin Bureau also makes it plain that it took a somewhat different line from that pursued by the KPD.⁴⁸² The letter requested an explanation of an article in *Die Rote Fahne* according

478 'Der Kampf um die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 88, 22 February 1921. In this article, the argument was once again put forward that in Germany – unlike in other countries – the syndicalists and industrial unionists were not of any great significance; the Gelsenkirchen Union, however, was a special case.

479 *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 96, 26 February 1921. Reisberg gives some details of the discussion (Reisberg 1971, vol. 1, pp. 77–8).

480 'Die K.A.P.D. und die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 6, February 1921, and *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, 1921, pp. 34–6.

481 For the text of the resolution agreed at the 28 February session of the ITUC, see RGASPI 534/3/2/20–2.

482 'Der "Vorwärts" als Enthüller', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 14, 16 April 1921.

to which communist trade unionists should in no circumstances establish joint candidate lists with syndicalists and industrial unionists in the elections for factory councils. Instead of this, the article said, they should work for the dissolution of these organisations. The fact that the ITUC raised a question about the background of this position makes it evident that it was not in agreement with such an approach.

The subsequent fate of this letter was characteristic of the situation. It got into the hands of the SPD (perhaps in the course of police raids after the March Action), which published it in *Vorwärts*. The newspaper issued by the VKPD's national trade-union centre then reprinted the letter, describing it as a document that had been falsified. But the VKPD's denial only applied to the financial support from Moscow which was also mentioned in it.⁴⁸³ It is therefore hard to avoid feeling that this *démenti* was also intended as a rejection of attempts to form alliances with syndicalists and industrial unionists. In any case, the Moscow archives confirm the genuineness of the letter from the ITUC.⁴⁸⁴

Another event now forced this conflict between the VKPD and Moscow into the background, and subsequently had the effect of lessening its seriousness, although an undertone of mistrust continued to exist in parts of the VKPD and would resurface when the occasion was appropriate. This new event was the 'March Action', the attempt of the VKPD to bring about a revolutionary situation through strike action, conducted in the manner of a *putsch*. As a result of the March Action, the party suffered a life-threatening crisis. It descended into a severe factional conflict, which pushed almost everything else into the background until the Third Comintern Congress.⁴⁸⁵ One result of the March Action was that Paul Levi broke definitively with the party he formerly led. He could count on the sympathy of certain sections, particularly former members of the USPD, and for a considerable period of time he sought to exert influence on the party from the outside.

One way of exerting such influence was to publish a periodical addressed to party members, and this is what Levi proceeded to do. In Levi's periodical,

483 *Vorwärts* had chosen to entitle the letter 'Moscow pays and calls the tune'.

484 The incident was discussed at a meeting of the Bolshevik fraction of the VTsSPS at the end of April. According to the record of this meeting, the letter was taken to Berlin by the Russian trade-union functionary Lutovinov. *Vorwärts* had obtained either the original or an exact copy of the original. Tomsy was instructed to clarify the background of the incident with Lutovinov, though there is no further relevant material in this particular archive file (RGASPI 95/1/22/71-2 and 77).

485 On this, see the fundamental study by Sigrid Koch-Baumgarten (1986).

Richard Müller, the leader of the metalworkers' union, who had been removed as chairman of the KPD's national trade-union centre after the March Action on account of his critical attitude,⁴⁸⁶ although he remained in the party for the moment, endeavoured to warn party members against the temptations of industrial unionism. Successive struggles had shown, he said, that the industrial unionists were 'by no means more revolutionary' than the reformist trade unionists.⁴⁸⁷ But owing to the massive wave of expulsions after March there was now 'a strong inclination in the Communist International to join together the left splinters of the trade union movement, the industrial unions and factory organisations', with the expelledes and to accept them into the RILU. 'In this way the antagonism of the Free Trade Unions to the Red International of Labour Unions will be exacerbated, the struggle between the two organisations will be waged with greater bitterness and as an inevitable result the RILU will be compelled to adopt the slogan "Destroy the Trade Unions!"'⁴⁸⁸ This question of the attitude to be adopted towards those expelled from the trade unions would also be a cause of conflict at the founding congress of the RILU. There, however, it turned out that, while the FAUD was boycotting the congress in any case, there was no longer a problem with the AAU. Quite apart from the fact that its influence was in rapid decline,⁴⁸⁹ the differences of approach between the AAU and the RILU, just like those between the KAPD and the Comintern, proved to be insurmountable.

There remained the 'Gelsenkirchen Union', which was committed in any case to co-operating with the KPD and the RILU. It had originated from the struggle of the miners of the Ruhr after the November revolution for their economic demands and above all for the socialisation of the mining industry. A number of local and regional unions had emerged from these movements. They were strongly antagonistic toward the General Miners' Union which was a part of the ADGB, and they showed a marked degree of syndicalist influence, even though they often had links with the KPD, or the KAPD after the 1919 split, and also with the left USPD. In September 1919, the syndicalists and industrial

486 Cf. *Bericht KPD-Parteitag* 1921, p. 29.

487 Richard Müller, 'Gewerkschaften und Revolution', *Sowjet*, no. 2, 15 May 1921, pp. 44–8.

488 Richard Müller, 'Auf dem Weg zur KAPD', *Sowjet*, no. 3, 1 June 1921, pp. 86–90.

489 On the eve of the RILU founding congress, Jacob Walcher wrote that the relative strength of the Free Trade Unions (with 10 million organised workers) and the industrial unions (with 300,000) showed how right the Second Comintern Congress had been in its attitude to the latter. The third congress would not be able to do anything other than confirm the position of the second ('Der dritte Weltkongress und die Gewerkschaftsfrage', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 252, 6 June 1921).

unionists of Rhineland-Westphalia joined together to form the Free Workers' Union (FAU), which then entered a common organisation with other German syndicalists. In December 1919, the 12th Congress of the German syndicalists adopted a name which reflected this: the Free Workers' Union of Germany (Syndicalists), or FAUD (S).

But in the Ruhr district, this merger was formal rather than real. Early in 1920, the united group began to fall to pieces again. The industrial unionists increasingly came under communist influence. They did not reject the political struggle or co-operation with political parties in principle, and they were oriented above all around the concept of a factory organisation rather than trade-based organisations. They now separated themselves from the syndicalists.⁴⁹⁰ They retained the name Free Workers' Union, but to mark the distinction from the syndicalists they added the word 'Gelsenkirchen', which was where their headquarters lay. At a congress at the end of October and the beginning of November 1920, the FAU-Gelsenkirchen joined together with a number of smaller miners' unions from Central Germany and Upper Silesia. With its 100,000 members, it became an influential organisation and a serious competitor for the social-democratic General Miners' Union. In the factory council elections in the mining industry of the Ruhr early in 1920, the FAU-Gelsenkirchen won 714 seats, and the Free Trade Unions 1,230, while the syndicalists won only 30 (in addition, the Christian Trade Unions won 535 seats, the Hirsch-Duncker unions 9, and the Poles 192). A year later, the FAU-Gelsenkirchen won 26 percent, the syndicalists 4.7 percent, and the Free Trade Unions 41.2 percent of the votes.

The FAU-Gelsenkirchen sent a delegation to the congress of the International Union of Mineworkers held in Geneva in August 1920, and they endeavoured to join it. But this organisation was the International Trade Secretariat of the miners, and the General Miners' Union was its German branch. The representatives of the General Miners' Union strongly resisted this idea, while the FAU-G itself began to understand how little it had in common with the International Trade Secretariat in political and trade-union matters of central importance.⁴⁹¹ It then turned to the International Trade Union Council, which had

490 Bartels 1920 is a pithy summary of the views of the industrial unionists. As he says, they criticised the existing trade unions but did not exclude the possibility of left factional work within them.

491 *Zwei Jahre Union*, Gelsenkirchen, 1921, pp. 23–4, and A.Bs., 'Warum hat sich die Freie Arbeiterunion Gelsenkirchen der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale angeschlossen?', *Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 7, March 1921. The official minutes of the congress only contain this sentence, which is clearly meant to refer to the FAU-G delegation: 'The independent workers' party of Germany is asked to apply to the German

just been set up. In mid-September, it sent a request to Moscow to join the new organisation. For security reasons the request was sent via four separate routes. 'The great value the F.A.U. attaches to its membership of the Red Trade Union International is shown by the fact that it declared in its request for admission that it was ready to adapt its statutes and declarations of fundamental principles to the statutes and theses of the Red Trade Union International'.⁴⁹² This showed the Gelsenkirchen Union's awareness that the ITUC would set conditions for admitting it, and it did indeed do this at its 25 November meeting.⁴⁹³ The ITUC was concerned first and foremost to make sure that the union gave up any attempt to persuade workers to withdraw from the reformist trade unions (under the slogan 'Get Out of the Trade Unions!'). A further problem for the ITUC was to determine the precise relationship between the FAU-G and the VKPD, which had already discussed this question in passing during the Unification Congress.

In January, the FAU-G engaged in a series of discussions, chiefly with the VKPD's national trade-union headquarters, in which the Berlin Bureau of the ITUC and Belen'ky also took part.⁴⁹⁴ The negotiators arrived at a compromise, which was confirmed on 1 February 1921 at a conference of the Gelsenkirchen Union.⁴⁹⁵ By this agreement, the FAU-G conceded that it would be closely connected with the VKPD, even if the latter would not have a formal leadership role, and it agreed to give up the attempt to draw members away from the reformist trade unions. Members of the VKPD would form a fraction within the FAU-G. In return, the VKPD did not demand the dissolution of the Gelsenkirchen Union and the return of its members to the General Miners' Union (which would have had the effect of strengthening the communist fraction which was working within the latter). Accordingly, the FAU-G became the

delegation' (*Protokoll des 25. Internationalen Bergarbeiter-Kongresses, Genf, 2. bis 6 August 1920*, London, undated, p. 78).

492 *Zwei Jahre Union*, Gelsenkirchen, 1921, p. 23. It was also conceded in the letter that there could possibly be differences between the two sets of statutes and principles. The text of the letter is printed in *Mouvement ouvrier international*, no. 2, February 1921, pp. 74–6.

493 RGASPI, 534/3/2/10.

494 There was a very significant meeting on 18 January 1921 in Berlin. Cf. the minutes of this meeting (in various versions) in SAPMO I 2/708/85/3–23, and the 'report on negotiations with the Free Workers' Union – Gelsenkirchen', which is unsigned but was produced in the RGZ and should be dated March or April 1921 (SAPMO I 2/708/85/110–13).

495 For the minutes of this conference see SAPMO I 2/708/85/24–33. See also 'Die Wirtschaftsrätekongferenz der Freien Arbeiter-Union (Gelsenkirchen) und ihre Stellung zur V.K.P.D.', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 6, 12 February 1921.

'first trade union organisation ... in Germany' to join the ITUC, as Belen'ky put it in his closing address to the Gelsenkirchen Union's conference on 1 February.⁴⁹⁶

But unity had only been achieved on paper. In the January negotiations, various different underlying interests had been in conflict. On the one hand, Belen'ky was concerned to gain the FAU-G as a member organisation of the ITUC; the aim of the VKPD on the other hand was to gain increased support for its fractional work in the General Miners' Union. Finally, one should bear in mind that the Gelsenkirchen Union did not carry out its side of the bargain.⁴⁹⁷ In practice, it endeavoured to strengthen its own organisation at the expense of the General Miners' Union. The creation of a communist fraction also did not make much progress. The leading members of the Gelsenkirchen Union admittedly joined the party, but they did not follow party discipline unconditionally. As early as 11 March, Heckert had to inform the ITUC that the Gelsenkirchen people were making difficulties.⁴⁹⁸ The conflict broke out into the open at the end of April. The leading group of the Gelsenkirchen Union resigned from the VKPD, because their membership in the party was hindering their struggle against the General Miners' Union.⁴⁹⁹ The FAU-G again started to spread the slogan 'Get Out of the Trade Unions!' and it now decided to create a revolutionary trade-union centre of its own. The first step to this was to form an association, or 'cartel', with two other small revolutionary unions.⁵⁰⁰

This forced the ITUC to react. But neither an appeal by the Berlin Bureau at a conference of the union on 10 May, nor a direct message from Moscow on 9 June, had any effect.⁵⁰¹ The VKPD also began an intensive campaign against the Gelsenkirchen Union, which led it to protest angrily to the Berlin Bureau of the ITUC and the VKPD leadership.⁵⁰²

496 SAPMO I 2/708/85/33.

497 Cf. the report mentioned in note 494.

498 SAPMO I 2/708/46.

499 Their declaration of resignation is in SAPMO I 2/708/85/132-5. The position of the RGZ is given in *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 18, 14 May 1921.

500 'Bericht über das "Rote Gewerkschaftskartell" in Deutschland', 26 June 1921 (SAPMO I 2/708/85/139-42).

501 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, 1921, p. 34; 'An die Mitglieder der F.A.U. Gelsenkirchen', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 18, 21 May 1921; 'Aufruf des Internationalen Rats der Fach- und Industrieverbände an die Mitglieder der Freien Arbeiter-Union Gelsenkirchen', *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 24, 2 July 1921.

502 See the letters of 3 June and 20 June in SAPMO I 21/708/85/137-8.

Admittedly, the Gelsenkirchen Union did not regard its confrontational course as a rejection of communism or of the ITUC. The leaders' declaration of resignation from the VKPD explicitly emphasised that this had only happened because of differences of view over the trade-union question. In line with this approach, the union would be represented at the founding congress of the RILU, where it formed part of the syndicalist opposition. In subsequent years, the aspiration to establish autonomous revolutionary unions would continue to give rise to numerous conflicts in the relationship between the union (which became the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain, or UdHuK, when it merged with its cartel partners in September), the KPD and the RILU.

The course towards close collaboration with syndicalist groupings thus brought considerable difficulties for the VKPD, as a party which centred its attention on work in the reformist trade unions, the unions which organised the overwhelming majority of the German workers. The compensation for this was what the ITUC (and later the RILU) gained by the adherence of these organisations. Smoothing out the contradictions which opened up as a result would require yet more effort in the future.

7 The International Trade Union Council, 1920–1: Its Programme, Activities and Organisation

The political perspectives of the ITUC had been laid down in broad outline by the debates around its founding declaration; they were then confirmed by the Second Comintern Congress. Even so, discussions continued in Russia, at the same time as the Council's structures were being established, in connection with the decision to call an international trade-union congress.

The controversy at the Ninth Conference of the Russian communist party, between 22–25 September 1920, turned out to be nothing more than an echo of earlier battles.⁵⁰³ Zinoviev gave a report to this conference on the Second Comintern Congress.⁵⁰⁴ In his introductory comments, he mentioned the foundation of the ITUC, without going into the subject any further. The central questions raised by the Second Congress were his main concern. These included the disagreements with the French and Italian socialists, as well as with the USPD. He laid particular emphasis on the presence of syndicalist

503 See the minutes: *Deviataia konferentsiia RKP (b). Sentiabr' 1920 goda. Protokoly*, Moscow, 1972.

504 *Deviataia konferentsiia* 1972, pp. 205–21.

groups at the congress, and he underlined the Comintern's intention to co-operate with them, already expressed at the First Congress, even if they had still not completely developed into communists, provided that they recognised the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Some of those who spoke after Zinoviev seized on this point when they criticised the negative attitude displayed by Radek shortly before the congress.⁵⁰⁵ The main reason for the attack on Radek, however, was his position on the offensive of the Red Army against Poland, which he had warned against on the basis of his knowledge of the mood in that country. Other Polish communists, in exile in Germany, had made similar comments, for which he was now held responsible. His earlier critical attitude towards the syndicalists, therefore, was only an additional argument, allowing him to be attacked as someone who was too much inclined to wait on events. This settlement of accounts with Radek was clearly intended as a retrospective justification for his removal from the post of Secretary of the Comintern after the Second World Congress.⁵⁰⁶ In general, it can be said that what was being articulated at this conference was the over-optimistic evaluation of the situation which would lead to the 'ultra-left' theory of the offensive and the March Action in Germany.⁵⁰⁷ But as far as the Second Congress and its attitude to the syndicalists were concerned, this reversion to previous controversies remained without any consequences. The resolution unanimously adopted explicitly confirmed the need to bring the syndicalists into the Comintern.⁵⁰⁸

505 The discussion, and Zinoviev's reply, is printed in *Deviataia konferentsiia* 1972, pp. 222–66.

506 Rosmer (1971, p. 80) thought the reason for Radek's removal at the ECCI session of 7 August 1920, which was also a complete surprise for him, lay in his 'united front' with Levi on the eve of the Comintern congress. Lazitch and Drachkovitch's reference to the significance of the Polish question (1972, p. 274) is, however, a much more convincing explanation. A vehement discussion of this took place behind doors that were closed even for Rosmer. In addition, it is a cause for astonishment that this ninth conference of the Bolshevik Party is generously ignored, not only by these two authors, but by the historiography of the Comintern in general.

507 The resolution on Zinoviev's report also contained the open suggestion that a revolutionary offensive in the West should be undertaken to relieve the burden on Russia: 'The conference proclaims ... the need to go over from passive, pacifistic support of Russia to the tactic of an active offensive in the defence of the first proletarian republic and the extension of the territory on which the power of the workers has been established and the capitalists defeated' (*Deviataia konferentsiia* 1972, p. 283).

508 'The conference declares that the attempt to bring revolutionary-syndicalist, industrialist and other elements into joint work in the ranks of the Communist International, to the

Even so, it could be seen that beneath the surface there were still a number of objections to this course. This became clear in the discussions of the Russian trade unions, whose voice was, after all, decisive in the ITUC. At several congresses of branch organisations – such as the chemical workers and the teachers – at the end of August, Tomsky went on to the offensive in justifying the establishment of the Council. They had sought the co-operation of the Western trade-union movement after the October revolution, he said, but it had not responded to any of their appeals. Instead of this, it had restored the International Federation of Trade Unions in close association with the League of Nations. Then he described the conversations with the British and Italian trade unionists, who had later been joined by the syndicalists. With the formation of the ITUC, a start had been made with a revolutionary alternative to Amsterdam. He accordingly rejected the demands of the few Mensheviks who were still active in the Russian trade unions, and who had spoken out in favour of entering the Amsterdam international.⁵⁰⁹

While the formation of the ITUC itself did not meet with any significant opposition, the role conceded in it to the syndicalists appears to have given rise to a number of reservations. A VTsSPS plenum met in the middle of October. It concerned itself with international perspectives, which were the subject of a detailed report by Tomsky.⁵¹⁰ There were three points about which he was not entirely clear, he said: first, he did not agree with the ‘Lozovsky-Radek’ formula that there were no circumstances in which one could split the trade unions. To say this was to make trade-union organisation into a fetish. One should bear the Russian experience in mind. There the Bolsheviks had, for example, split the Menshevik-led printworkers’ union, and they had organised factory committees in opposition to the trade unions. He suggested that one could do something similar once the communist parties of the West had become stronger. Secondly, as regards the syndicalists, he defended the

extent that they recognise the dictatorship of the proletariat as a weapon in the social revolution, is completely justified’ (*Deviataia konferentsiia* 1972, pp. 282–3).

509 Tomsky’s two speeches (there were presumably others as well) are documented in Tomskii 1928, vol. 6, pp. 22–4 and 25–38. He went into more detail in his article ‘Nashi zadachi v mezhdunarodnom professional’nom dvizheniia’, printed in the first issue of the new VTsSPS journal *Vestnik truda*, October 1920, pp. 39–51.

510 There are some references to this plenum in Karpachev 1976, p. 106 and Pankratov 1972, pp. 106–8. Both authors are at pains to avoid mentioning Tomsky’s name. Volume 6 of Tomsky’s collected works includes only the speech he made at a meeting of the Bolshevik fraction, although the arguments he used there are not likely to have differed from those he used at the plenum (Tomskii 1928, vol. 6, pp. 52–73).

idea of co-operating with them. At first the wrong approach had been taken. But the possibility of co-operation had become apparent very soon after the formal establishment of the ITUC. Finally, he defended the ITUC's right to an independent existence. He did not share Zinoviev's opinion, for example, that the ITUC should be nothing but a section of the Comintern. This particular question was still open. For the moment the ITUC would have to remain independent of the Comintern. In this connection, he also mentioned that the decision to house the ITUC in the building of the VTsSPS had provoked some 'discontent on the part of the comrades working in the Comintern'. After that, a number of speakers at the plenum complained that the ITUC did not display its communist character sufficiently, though they did not question the need for the organisation as such. It seems that two or three people came out in opposition to co-operation with the syndicalists.⁵¹¹

The discussion on the proper foundation for the International Trade Union Council was taken up again at the fifth conference of the Russian trade unions, in November, though of course it was the future role of the trade unions in Russia that was the main topic, and this conference saw the 'trade union discussion' in the Bolshevik leadership break out into an open confrontation.⁵¹² But both the report of the delegation which had returned from Germany on the eve of the conference, on 2 November, and the numerous messages of greeting – from a Czechoslovak delegation, a Hungarian delegation, a representative of the CSR movement from France, Otto Rieger of the Seamen's Union and Murphy – demonstrated that the Russian trade unions now had extensive international contacts at their disposal.⁵¹³

The final point on the agenda was devoted to the international trade-union movement. Tomsy reported on this, and once again he gave the reasons for the Bolsheviks' rejection of Amsterdam and their establishment of the ITUC.⁵¹⁴ This time he stressed in addition that each individual Russian trade union, quite independently of this project, must join the relevant International Trade Secretariat. He probably had in mind the efforts being made to bring the Rus-

511 It is possible at least to draw this conclusion from a comment by Tomsy in his report to the Fifth Trade Union Conference (Tomskii 1928, vol. 6, p. 94).

512 For the minutes, see *Piataia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов* 1921. For the course of the conference, see also Garvi 1981, pp. 85–8. See above, chapter 3, section 6, note 147, on the trade-union discussion in general.

513 The greetings are printed in *Piataia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов* 1921, pp. 13–21.

514 *Piataia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов* 1921, pp. 166–73 and Tomskii 1928, vol. 6, pp. 90–8.

sian printworkers and chemical workers into their appropriate ITSS (see section 9 of this chapter), but this point was not discussed at the conference. He also seized on two remarks Zinoviev had made in his speech greeting the conference as representative of the Comintern.⁵¹⁵ It appeared from this speech that the opinion of Zinoviev was at odds with the Russian trade-union leadership over its evaluation of the syndicalists and over the need for the future trade-union international to be a part of the Comintern. Tomskey bluntly rejected Zinoviev's assertions about the syndicalists. The Russian trade unions had explicitly approved the admission of the syndicalists, he said. He went on to give a detailed presentation of their behaviour. They had vacillated to and fro, and in the discussions on the establishment of the ITUC they had spoken vehemently against the dictatorship of the proletariat and the connection with the Comintern. In the last resort they had agreed to join. It must be put on record, nevertheless, he added, that we still have differences of opinion with them. On the question of the relationship between the party and the trade union, and the Comintern and the ITUC, he would place the emphasis somewhat differently. He warned against excessive optimism. It would take much longer in the West before the trade unions developed towards communism. This point was made more clearly in the resolution Tomskey put forward to the conference: co-operation with the syndicalists was once again explicitly confirmed, but the regulation of their future association must be left to the planned international congress, at which the Russian trade unions would of course come out in favour of a close connection.

Tomskey's comments did not evoke much discussion.⁵¹⁶ Lozovsky said that they should push for the entry of the ITUC into the Comintern, even if this was not an ultimatum but first had to be decided by the forthcoming congress. In response to this, a delegate named Fadeev commented that Tomskey and Lozovsky were evaluating the situation in different ways. Whereas for Tomskey the call for joining the Comintern would still give rise to great differences of opinion among the left trade unionists, Lozovsky already saw them as adopting the standpoint of the Comintern. The conference voted for Tomskey's resolution, however. The decision was thus made dependent on the concrete situation at the future congress.

The critical internal political situation and the fierce intra-party struggle of the winter of 1920–1 took so much of the attention of the party and the trade unions that the discussion on the role of the ITUC was completely marginalised.

⁵¹⁵ *Piataia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов* 1921, pp. 5–13.

⁵¹⁶ *Piataia vserossiiskaia konferentsiia professional'nykh soiuзов* 1921, pp. 173–6.

The subject did not surface even in the ITUC, which was the institution directly concerned. When the Tenth Party Congress opened on 8 March, the agenda had as its penultimate item, before the elections to the CC, the 'report of the members of the RCP in the International Trade Union Council'.⁵¹⁷ But Kronstadt and the introduction of the New Economic Policy had priority. The agenda was repeatedly changed in the course of the congress, and the ITUC item simply disappeared. When the role of the trade unions in internal policy was discussed, their international tasks did not even come up once. Not even in the draft resolutions was there a passage dealing with international trade-union matters.

Zinoviev was the only person to mention the ITUC (in 'two words') in his report on the Comintern, in which he passed in review the situation of the various communist parties, laying most emphasis on the VKPD and the PCI.⁵¹⁸ Revolt was 'seething' in the international trade-union movement. In Germany, France and Italy, indeed 'in the whole of the world', communism was conquering the trade unions. The international trade-union congress was being prepared. It would start on the first of June. He did not waste a single word on the political and organisational problems connected with the ITUC. Nor did the resolution adopted without discussion after his report contain any reference to that organisation.⁵¹⁹

The fourth Russian congress of trade unions, on the other hand, which met from 17–25 May, did have to concern itself with international perspectives.⁵²⁰ After all, its session was held only a few weeks before the international trade-union congress assembled, a point which Tomsky stressed in his opening speech.⁵²¹ The first delegates to the international congress started arriving as early as April, and the ITUC was in intensive discussions with them (see the next chapter). The speeches they made to greet the opening of the Russian trade-union congress gave it a strongly 'internationalist' flavour.⁵²²

Shortly before the Russian trade-union congress opened, an incident took place at a meeting of the Bolshevik delegates which led to Tomsky's dismissal. He ceased to be the chairman of the Russian trade unions, which meant he also lost the position of general secretary of the ITUC, and he was 'ordered to

⁵¹⁷ *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP* 1921, p. 6.

⁵¹⁸ *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP* 1921, pp. 500–16.

⁵¹⁹ *Desiatyi s'ezd RKP* 1921, pp. 612–13.

⁵²⁰ For the minutes, see *Chetvertyi vserossiiskii s'ezd* 1921.

⁵²¹ *Chetvertyi vserossiiskii s'ezd* 1921, pp. 3–4.

⁵²² Dimitrov, Haywood, Nat Watkins, Heckert and an Indian representative all addressed the Russian trade-union congress (*Chetvertyi vserossiiskii s'ezd* 1921, pp. 6–10 and 12–16).

report' to Turkestan, where he had to stay until the beginning of 1922.⁵²³ This meant that Lozovsky acquired the role of the international spokesman of the Russian trade unions, and he now delivered the report on international matters to the congress.⁵²⁴ (It is not clear from the minutes whether it was originally envisaged that Tomsy would make this report. It is, however, very likely that he would have done so if he had retained the position of general secretary of the ITUC).

Ranging far and wide, Lozovsky began by depicting the vast panorama of the international trade-union movement with its membership of over forty million. The ITUC, he said, could already lay claim to over fourteen million of these people. In his sweeping calculations, he added together trade unions that had joined *en bloc* as well as central offices with communist minorities, and he did not attempt to question the membership figures put forward by the organisations. In view of these millions of supporters, he was able to present an optimistic view of future prospects in the course of his analysis of the situation in many countries, including the USA, France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany. He indicated a series of questions which he thought still needed to be answered at the international congress, which was a way of saying that they would be a subject of dispute there. For one thing, it was necessary to get the syndicalists and other supporters of the independence of the trade unions to recognise not only the revolutionary class struggle in general, but also the dictatorship of the proletariat and the ideological leadership of the Communist International. Secondly, relations between the ITUC and the Comintern must be settled. There could only be one international. This should not be presented as an ultimatum, however, but rather as an objective which could only be attained by waging an ideological struggle. The final question was the attitude they should take to

523 At a meeting of the Bolshevik fraction, Tomsy had allowed the passage of an amendment by Riazanov to the theses already approved by the CC for transmission to the trade-union congress. The amendment was aimed at strengthening the rights of the trade unions. The party leadership around Lenin feared that this might allow the trade unions to escape from their strict control. They also suspected that Tomsy might enter an alliance with the remnants of the Workers' Opposition and the supporters of Trotsky in the trade unions. Tomsy and Riazanov were removed by the CC on 18 May from trade-union activities. On the significance of this incident, see Daniels 1960, pp. 157–8 and Schapiro 1955, pp. 324–5. There is rich material on the subject in Chechevishnikov 1990, pp. 171–7. On 5 January 1922, the Politbureau decided to send Tomsy back into the VTsSPS. The large-scale implementation of the NEP had in the meantime placed a strengthening of the trade unions on the agenda (see Chechevishnikov 1990, p. 176).

524 *Chetvertyi vserossiiskii s'ezd* 1921, pp. 80–94.

the International Trade Secretariats and the increasing number of expulsions from the European trade unions. It was decided 'by majority vote' not to discuss Lozovsky's report. The theses accompanying the report, which also laid down the attitude the Russian delegates should take up at the international congress, were adopted with six abstentions.⁵²⁵

The discussions we have so far examined produced increasing clarity about the political and programmatic foundations which would make the International Trade Union Council into the nucleus of the Red International of Labour Unions. The revolutionary syndicalists, who had almost seemed like accidental gatecrashers when the ITUC was set up in June and July 1920, were now firmly and unquestionably involved in it. This inevitably strengthened the Council's independent position. While endeavouring to secure the support of the syndicalists, the Bolsheviks did not let this interfere with their opposition to syndicalist attempts to split the reformist trade unions. The objections Tomsky made in autumn 1920 to the slogan of 'no splitting under any circumstances' turned out to be abstract concerns which rapidly lost any significance in the course of events. There was a certain contradiction involved in splitting internationally but not nationally. This argument, however, which had already been put forward at the Second Comintern Congress, continued to be pushed into the background by the Bolsheviks' optimism about future prospects.

Thus the ITUC had grown from a mere committee set up to call an international congress into an international of its own, almost without its creators being aware of what had happened. What was decisive was that the Russian trade-union leadership had made it into its own project. It was certainly Tomsky who had stamped his influence on the Council, giving it its specific shape. As the chairman of the Russian trade unions and a member of the Bolshevik leadership, he could bring to bear a great deal of political weight, and he was therefore able to strengthen the Council's autonomous character, perhaps to a certain extent in competition with the Comintern's chairman Zinoviev, who openly intended to run the ITUC merely as a subordinate section of that institution.⁵²⁶

525 *Chetvertyi vsrossiiskii s'ezd* 1921, pp. 110–14. It was determined, among other things, that the Russian delegates should call for a single international, but they should also be prepared to give way if the majority of the congress opposed this. They should also support bringing together the expelled workers into a single union. The theses also determined the Russian delegates' position on voting methods: voting was to be by country, not by organisation.

526 For example, a CC plenum held on 29 September 1920 heard a report by Tomsky and then

The creation of a firm organisation for the ITUC was at least as important a task as establishing a basic programme for it. Leadership was of paramount importance here. By the middle of August, with the election of Tomsky and Rosmer, two of the three statutory members of the Bureau were in place. It was the Comintern's job to appoint the third member (see section 3 of this chapter). In the first instance, Tomsky and Rosmer took part in most of the sittings, but the composition of the Bureau varied considerably in subsequent months.⁵²⁷ As early as the second half of August, Murphy joined in, after the agreement with the syndicalists. He remained until October, when he left Russia to set up the British Bureau (only to return again the following March). If foreign trade-union representatives happened to be in Russia, they occasionally took part in its meetings.⁵²⁸ One person who was definitely not expected to be a member, either of the Bureau or of the Council itself, was Lozovsky. One might be surprised at this, because he had in fact conducted the negotiations which led to the Council's establishment. But he had only become involved in this task because of his international experience and linguistic abilities. The Bolshevik party leadership had no intention of giving him a high-level political function, doubtless because of his attitude just after the October Revolution, an unwillingness that was again confirmed at the beginning of 1922. On 5 August 1920, Tomsky proposed to a CC plenum that Lozovsky be appointed to work with him. His proposal was rejected.⁵²⁹ In November, the CC again discussed Lozovsky's case (he had in the meantime been in Germany with the VTSPS delegation, to which he did not belong officially, but of which he was in practice the spokesman). It now proposed that the Comintern should delegate him to the ITUC as its representative.⁵³⁰ The ECCI agreed to this at its sitting of 28 November 1920.⁵³¹

set up a committee to establish the necessary boundaries between the apparatuses of the two organisations (RGASPI 17/2/36/1).

527 The information given here has been extracted from the official minutes (RGASPI 534/3/2), if another source is not given.

528 For example, Hélène Brion of the CSR movement, who was visiting Russia for a few months, and William Paul, the representative of the CPGB. Curt Geyer and Wilhelm Koenen were also present in March and April 1921. They had been sent to Moscow by the VKPD in relation to the leadership crisis in that party. The representative of the Dutch communist party, 'Jansen' (his name was actually Johan Proost), also frequently took part (for Brion and 'Jansen', see Rosmer 1971, pp. 94 and 97).

529 RGASPI 17/2/36/2.

530 RGASPI 17/2/41/2.

531 *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 15, 1921, p. 417.

All Lozovsky's international experience could not alter the fact that Tomskey was a man of much greater political stature, and at first he continued to call the tune in the ITUC. Tomskey's big problem was rather the competing demands of his much more important position of chairman of the Russian trade unions. In fact, at a sitting of the Bureau on 25 November, the Bulgarian representative, Shablin, brought up the question of the way the pressure of work was affecting Tomskey.⁵³² A resolution was then passed 'to propose to all members of the Bureau and the Council that they direct their attention to utilising their energies to the greatest possible extent in the Council'. This remained a pious aspiration. Tomskey was once again the recipient of sharp criticism when Murphy returned from Britain in March and made a fierce attack on the Council's general mode of work and the state of its apparatus. What was needed, he said, was a general secretary who would be at his post every day, even when there were no sittings, and who could give the necessary directives. A new resolution was passed, 'to propose to the general secretary that he direct greater attention to the ITUC as a whole and its apparatus in particular'.⁵³³ But this problem was caused by Tomskey's dual function, and it could not be solved by making constant appeals for improvement. At that point, an accidental change in the political constellation produced a new situation. As we have seen, Tomskey came into conflict with the party leadership after the fourth Russian trade-union congress, and his removal from both the chairmanship of the VTsSPS and his job in the ITUC was decided at a CC sitting on 18 May. The CC decided that he should be replaced by Lozovsky and Tsyperovich.⁵³⁴ But Tsyperovich worked in Petrograd and could therefore play only a marginal role, as was to become apparent in the next few months. It was therefore only logical for Lozovsky to be elected general secretary at a meeting on 1 June, a decision which certainly had been cleared at the highest party level.⁵³⁵ The choice of Lozovsky reflected the fact that he was conducting the discussions with the delegates who were just arriving, and presenting them with the most important draft resolutions (see the next chapter). He had grown into this position of international leadership, therefore, rather than being picked out for it in advance.

532 RGASPI 534/3/2/11.

533 RGASPI 534/3/2/28–40. This session of 26 March 1921 is one of the few in which the minutes give an account (albeit a brief one) of the various arguments put forward in the course of the discussion.

534 RGASPI 17/2/65/10b.

535 RGASPI 534/3/2/62.

These changes in the composition of the ITUC were to a considerable degree an expression of its provisional character. This is why there was hardly any discussion of the question of formally admitting further organisations to the Council, in addition to the founding group of organisations. In September, a request by the KPÖ that the ITUC admit its trade-union section was rejected, on the grounds that only trade-union organisations could become members. At the beginning of September, a similar request by the Polish Bureau of the RCP (b) was rejected, although the party leader, Walecki, was granted provisional voting rights in April, which were to last until the revolutionary Polish trade unions were in a position to provide a mandate of their own.⁵³⁶ This way of proceeding was the expression of the principle of co-optation, according to which supreme bodies, once in place, could independently increase their membership. During the pre-revolutionary debates over the organisation of Russian Social Democracy, Lenin had emphatically supported this principle, justifying it by referring to the situation of strict illegality.⁵³⁷ Here it was noticeable that alongside the few independent trade unions it was increasingly the trade-union sections of the communist parties which occupied the foreground. For them, formal membership of the Council no longer had much significance since its main task, after all, was to hold the international trade-union congress which would only then set up the actual organisation.

The somewhat improvised character of the Council was also shown, for one thing, by the way its title oscillated over the months between 'Bureau of the Trade Union Council' and simply 'Trade Union Council' – from the beginning of 1921 the minutes of both bodies were numbered in series without distinguishing between them – while the group of participants hardly differed from one to the other. This was certainly a result of the fact that a considerable number of the founding members of the Council, who had after all not come to Moscow for a long stay, had in the meantime had to return home again. In this way the boundary between the two bodies became blurred, and this had a corresponding impact on the way they were viewed. The Council's improvised character was also shown by the fact that between September and February its

536 RGASPI 534/3/2/7 440b, 50.

537 Solomon Rozovsky, who acted as a kind of secretary to the ITUC, put forward a plan in April 1921 for the general regulation of the membership and the mandates giving the entitlement to vote. But this was such a short time before the founding congress of the RILU that it was of no real significance (RGASPI 534/3/2/41, 49). Later on the composition of the leading bodies of the RILU would also vary, although they were elected at congresses according to the statutory provisions.

sessions did not take place in the fortnightly rhythm laid down when it was set up,⁵³⁸ but only once a month.⁵³⁹

The practical side of constructing the ITUC apparatus was taken in hand by the secretaries of the Bureau or Council, who were not mentioned in the Council's statutes, but acted in a managerial capacity.⁵⁴⁰ The secretary during the first few months was Iarotsky, but he was replaced by Rozovsky at the beginning of January 1921. If one disregards the purely technical services an administrative apparatus must have at its disposal,⁵⁴¹ the apparatus originally consisted of the sections of the Council. These were responsible for specific groups of countries. Each was placed under a member of the Bureau. They had the task of 'preparing materials for the work in each group of countries, establishing active intellectual links with the appropriate organisations in these countries and continuously directing the work of the representatives of the ITUC in the places where they were stationed'. Five sections were set up: German (Central European), Latin, English, American and Eastern.⁵⁴²

538 See the 'Supplement to the Statutes' printed in *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 116–17.

539 Admittedly, it can only be assumed with a high degree of probability that the minutes of the Council or Bureau have been preserved in their entirety in the RILU archive. There is no possibility of checking this. The Soviet compulsion to exert complete control, even as early as this stormy period, makes it unlikely that any minutes have been lost, but if they were, the number must have been very limited. It should rather be assumed that many matters were cleared up informally when the Council was not sitting by discussions between Tomsy and members of the emerging ITUC apparatus. Karpachev (1976, pp. 100 and 105) quotes the conclusions of two 'council sessions', referring to VTsSPS materials, but there is no evidence in the RILU archive that they took place. These informal discussions between Tomsy and his colleagues could well be the explanation for this.

540 This is the function ascribed to them in the minutes of the Council. The following sketch of the apparatus is derived from its activities as they are reflected in the minutes, but also depends heavily on Iarotsky's article 'Der internationale Gewerkschaftsrat. Organisation und Kampf' (*Kommunistische Internationale*, 1921, pp. 335–45). Organisational plans by Tomsy and Lozovsky, found in the VTsSPS archive, give a similar picture (see GARF 5451/13a/625/1–6).

541 In the above-mentioned organisational plans, the execution of general tasks of an organisational character is assigned to the 'general secretariat' [*obshchii sekretariat*] and the main administrative section [*upravlenie delami*], which Arosev was appointed to direct early in 1921 (RGASPI 534/3/2/51).

542 Jarotzki 1921, p. 336. In February, the Council decided against creating a separate Spanish – South American section (RGASPI 534/3/2/18). The minutes for May and June give the names of some of the section chiefs: Boris Reinstein headed the American section, with

While these sections were therefore concerned with the work in a concrete geographical area, two further departments arose alongside them for tasks which had to be fulfilled centrally. The press department was responsible for the production of the Council's extensive literary output.⁵⁴³ One aspect of this was the large pamphlet literature in which, for example, the work of the Soviet trade unions or the Council itself was depicted. These publications had of course to be printed in different editions in the appropriate languages of each country so as to be able to reach a Western public.⁵⁴⁴ The main effort, however, was put into publishing the organs of the ITUC. The statutes of the Council already envisaged a bulletin in four languages.⁵⁴⁵ After considerable teething troubles,⁵⁴⁶ a monthly journal, 'The International Workers' Movement', began to appear at the beginning of 1921. It was published in Russian, German, English and French. Six issues came out in the period up to the RILU congress, one of them a double issue. Here too it was immediately clear that reprints in foreign languages were necessary to achieve circulation in Western Europe.⁵⁴⁷ In terms of its frequency of appearance and presentation, this was a theoretical organ, intended to give international publicity to the positions adopted by the Council. In addition to this, there was seen to be a need for organs that were related to particular countries and appeared more frequently, so that they could intervene directly in trade-union disputes. The job of publishing them was entrusted to the bureaux established abroad (see below). For Russia alone, the Council started to issue an information bulletin in March. The Russian title was *Biulleten' Mezhdunarodnogo Soveta Professional'nykh Soiuzov* [Bulletin of the International Council of Trade Unions].

Breslauer as his assistant; Leder the German section; Ploshchansky the English section, with Muskat as his assistant; and Rozovsky headed the Eastern (Oriental) section (RGASPI 534/3/2/51, 59 and 62).

543 Jarotzki 1921, pp. 339–40.

544 Rozovsky presented a plan at the beginning of February for publishing abroad, which included the acquisition of a publishing house in Berlin (RGASPI 534/3/2/45). This was naturally a big financial problem, first and foremost, but it would also turn out to be a political problem.

545 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 115.

546 According to Karpachev (1976, p. 100), it was decided at the beginning of September to issue a fortnightly bulletin. But by the middle of December, the Council was demanding an explanation from Jarotzky for the late appearance of the bulletin (RGASPI 534/3/2/13).

547 It was not possible to establish precisely the extent to which all the issues which appeared in Russia were then re-issued abroad in the appropriate languages. Only a few issues of the German edition could be discovered, with the result that the journal has had to be quoted in various different languages here.

The Communications Department was another 'central' apparatus of the ITUC, the first task of which was the organisation of the congress in a technical sense. It had the further task of establishing connections between the Russian unions representing particular industries and the trade unions of the West, with the particular aim of influencing the International Trade Secretariats. This task arose because the Russian trade unions had failed in their attempts to become members of the ITSS. (Instead of accepting the Russians, the ITSS declared their membership of the IFTU. See section 9 of this chapter).

With these measures, a structure had been created which was appropriate to the specific tasks the ITUC needed to perform. As Jarotsky remarked, these differed from the tasks of the IFTU and its leadership.⁵⁴⁸ The IFTU was a federation, constructed on the basis of the existing national trade-union centres. The ITUC, in contrast, had to co-ordinate together members who were involved in a wide range of organisational contexts: alongside the small number of independent associations, the bulk of its members were oppositional minorities in already existing trade unions. This array of tasks required leadership structures to be centralist in character.

By the spring of 1921, the ITUC already had a staff of more than one hundred, as can be seen from a remark by Lozovsky at one of its sittings. Rozovsky added the information that 80 of these were employed in the publishing department.⁵⁴⁹ But under the extreme conditions prevailing in Soviet Russia at the end of the civil war, this appeared to be more impressive than it was. The ITUC had to work hard to gain qualified co-workers.⁵⁵⁰ Many of its employees were foreigners, since the Russian trade-union movement did not have at its disposal cadres with foreign language skills.⁵⁵¹ Moreover, these people had to be fed and accommodated in hungry and freezing Moscow. Hence questions of rations (*paek*) or dwellings came up at meetings of the ITUC, or were presented in correspondence with the Comintern as an urgent problem, despite the

548 Jarotzki 1921, pp. 335–6.

549 RGASPI 534/3/2/37. Compared with this, the IFTU employed roughly forty people at the beginning of 1922 (*First Report* 1922, p. 20). Since it did not manage its member organisations (and so did not have any foreign bureaux), these employees were, with the exception of the two secretaries Oudegeest and Fimmen, technical personnel such as shorthand typists dealing with many different languages, translators, editors of publications, and so on.

550 Tomskey had already complained strongly about the shortage of suitable personnel at a meeting of the Bolshevik fraction of the VTsSPS held in October (Tomskii 1928, vol. 6, p. 71).

551 Tomskey made this comment (RGASPI 534/3/2/37).

Council's previous endeavours to assert its independence.⁵⁵² There were even shortages of such banal objects as 'tables, chairs, means of transport and telephones'.⁵⁵³

In his memoirs, Alfred Rosmer portrayed the conditions under which he worked in the winter of 1920–1 in the quarters allotted to the Council: 'Here there was no luxury at all, no trace of luxury of any kind. It was extreme poverty, just the very minimum requirements for work. Little heating or none at all, and above all a terrible smell of fish soup which filled the whole building. It was apparently the only item on the canteen menu. Despite everything the unions were like poor relations ... And the overriding fact is that there was a shortage of men ... After a day in those freezing offices we felt rather sluggish and we were glad to get into the keen air outside, even when the thermometer was showing 25 degrees below zero'.⁵⁵⁴

In such a situation the work of the apparatus continued to leave much to be desired. Accordingly, criticism of its inadequacies runs like a red thread through the discussions of the ITUC, especially when the demands on the organisation became more intense after the turn of the year owing to the expansion of its publishing activity and the preparations for the international trade-union congress. These criticisms were made very strongly by Murphy when he returned from Britain in March. With him it was a combination of things. Above all he felt that the Comintern representatives in Berlin, despite earlier promises, had not supplied him with sufficient money for his journey to Britain that autumn, and he made the general demand that extra funds be

552 RGASPI 534/3/2/14; 534/3/4.

553 This is according to Tomskey (Tomskey 1928, vol. 6, p. 71). For example, at a meeting on 16 December, the Council asked the VTsSPS for four more typewriters and additional telephone connections (RGASPI 534/3/2/12).

554 Rosmer 1971, p. 93. Murphy made similar comments on the situation after his return to Russia in March: 'The food shortage hit everybody. Although all the foreign delegates were treated as privileged people even their rations were down to a very low level. A piece of black bread, often containing sand and straw with glasses of the weakest possible tea served us until dinner at 4 p.m. Then we had a hot meal of thin soup, potatoes and a little meat or fish when it could be obtained. Then some time during the evening we would again get a piece of bread and a glass of tea. We were favoured too by the fact that frequently new delegates arrived and brought some food in with them as we had done. But those supplies soon ran out. Our difficulties were nothing as compared with those of the Russians. As we made our way each day to the headquarters of the trade unions and back again we would see both animals and people overcome with exhaustion in the streets. The buildings were not heated and office workers tried to work wrapped in overcoats or any old garment that would provide some small measure of warmth' (Murphy 1941, pp. 169–70).

supplied for the work in Britain. Nevertheless, the discussion of his criticisms at two sessions of the Council turned into a general examination of the way the apparatus was working.⁵⁵⁵ Both Rozovsky and Tomsky had to put up with serious criticisms from members of the Council. These complaints were not so much concerned with a lack of political skill as with working practices. Murphy reported that he had repeatedly turned up at 10 o'clock and found that the heads of departments or sections arrived later, or simply did not appear at all. They were not seriously committed to the work. As on previous occasions, a number of resolutions were then passed which contained concrete instructions for the apparatus (for example, schedules of work were to be established) and laid down the obligations of members of the Council. But under the prevailing conditions the Council could do no more than exhort its apparatus to do better. The general situation at the end of the civil war inevitably worsened all the organisational deficiencies. As Rosmer wrote, 'This oriental lack of concern was one of the negative features in the Russian character, which in so many other ways is appealing'.⁵⁵⁶

As far as the finances of the ITUC were concerned, a rule passed by the Orgbureau of the RCP (b) was applied. According to this, the costs incurred in Russia were to be borne by the VTsSPS, but those incurred abroad were to be borne by the Comintern.⁵⁵⁷ The problem of acquiring foreign currency lay behind this division of responsibilities. The Russian trade unions had no foreign currency (or at least not a sufficient amount), while the Comintern could fall back on quantities of gold and precious stones which had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks.⁵⁵⁸

According to the reports presented to the 19 March 1921 session of the ITUC, it had received 500,000 gold roubles in the previous autumn for work abroad. This corresponded to £50,000, according to the planned budget of the Council.⁵⁵⁹ In February, Rozovsky presented a new foreign budget, which envisaged an expenditure of 900,000 gold roubles in the months leading up to the international trade-union congress, hence almost double the previous amount. His

555 RGASPI 534/3/2/24-7, and 36-9. In any case, criticisms of the bad state of the apparatus had already emerged at previous meetings of the Council, on 15 October and on 17 January, for example (RGASPI 534/3/2/8 and 17).

556 Rosmer 1971, p. 94.

557 RGASPI 534/8/5/2.

558 Jewellery was a favourite means of payment for the Bolsheviks at this early period. See, for example, the data and financial summaries, based on documents from the archives, in Loupan and Lorrain 1994, pp. 41-64.

559 RGASPI 534/3/2/35 and 36.

chief argument for this was that the foreign bureaux of the ITUC had now started their work, and numerous Russian representatives needed to be sent abroad. In terms of individual items, the following monthly amounts were proposed: foreign bureaux £11,500 (including £3,500 for Germany, and £2,500 for Britain), sending Russians abroad to work in the bureaux £1,500, Russian delegations to the congresses of foreign trade unions £1,200, the production of literature abroad £800, and finally the printing costs for the organ of the ITUC £3,000. (This did not of course include any of the cost of mounting the international congress).⁵⁶⁰

After his return to Russia in March, Murphy protested strongly against the level at which these amounts had been set. He proceeded from the view that to achieve the plans of the British Bureau he had set up, much more money was needed than the budget had allotted to it. He demanded that the ITUC establish its budget according to its own needs rather than the sums of money allotted to it by other bodies. Such a demand could also be understood as an attempt to become independent of the Comintern. But the ITUC was in fact dependent on the Comintern in many ways. And ultimately the resources of the Comintern were themselves limited. Murphy therefore received no support from anyone else at the two meetings of the ITUC which discussed this proposal.⁵⁶¹

There is no doubt that enormous sums of money were being spent, since the amounts referred to here only covered the work done abroad. The expenditure within Russia needs to be added as well, although it was accounted for in 'inflation roubles' and it is therefore difficult to calculate its real value. In any case, there are no data preserved in the RILU archive for this period on expenditure within Russia.⁵⁶²

In view of Moscow's isolated situation, the ITUC set up a number of different foreign bureaux so as to have a direct international presence. These were constructed in parallel to the sections. The first one was set up in Baku by Archil Mikadze, a member of the Georgian Trade Union Council, for work in the Turkish-Caucasian-Persian region. With the best will in the world, the trade-union movement there could only be described as rudimentary. There were

⁵⁶⁰ RGASPI 534/8/1.

⁵⁶¹ RGASPI 534/3/2/23–40.

⁵⁶² It is possible that there is information in the Presidential Archive, the former Archive of the Politbureau, which is not freely accessible to researchers. For a comparison with the finances of the IFTU (which was, however, structured in a very different way), see the summaries covering the period from August 1919 to the end of 1921 in *First Report 1922*, pp. 79–93. According to this evidence, income and expenditure in 1921 was in both cases just under 500,000 marks (roughly 160,000 guilders).

at least the beginnings of a movement in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul. The creation of Mikadze's bureau was the result of a conference of Turkish communists which had taken place in Baku in mid-September. The ITUC resolved in mid-October to transfer 500,000 roubles to cover the cost of establishing it. It did not, however, show much sign of its existence subsequently. At least, the report from the ITUC to the founding congress of the RILU did not mention any further activities by it.⁵⁶³

The most important bureau was the one in Berlin. As we mentioned earlier, this had its origins in the contacts made by the Russian trade-union delegation in that city the previous year. In October 1920, on his way back from Moscow to Britain, Murphy broke his journey in Berlin and vainly endeavoured to gain the co-operation of the FAUD. This question seems also to have been discussed with the delegation the Berlin Trade Union Commission sent to Russia. At a meeting on 25 November, the Council decided that the Berlin bureau should consist of three people, and it confirmed Rusch as the first of these. Brandler and a third person would subsequently be brought in to the bureau.⁵⁶⁴ Shortly after this, Murphy sent an urgent appeal from London to the VKPD leadership asking it to support this bureau, which had its finances guaranteed by the ITUC.⁵⁶⁵

On 6 April, after returning from a trip to Germany, Lutovinov reported in detail on the Berlin bureau, which had got off the ground in the meantime. He indicated that its composition was as follows: Rusch, Brandler and Heckert, with Max Ziese as secretary. He was critical of the working of the bureau, however, since Rusch and Brandler were very much limited in their activities because of other obligations. This was made worse by the state of crisis in the VKPD after the end of March, as a result of the March Action.⁵⁶⁶ When Murphy stopped in Berlin at the end of April on his way to the ITF congress, he asked

563 Jarotzki 1921 pp. 337–8; *Bericht des Internationalen Rates*, pp. 57–9; and RGASPI 534/3/2/8 and 9. There are some references to the activities of this bureau in the materials for the Eastern Section for this period (RGASPI 534/3/7). Cf. Harris 1976, pp. 97–106, on the 'International Workers' Association' in Istanbul. This had a largely Greek membership, he says, and this made it difficult to create an organisation among Turkish workers. Not until the Bolsheviks marched into Georgia at the beginning of 1921 could the communist trade unionists of that country establish direct connections with the ITUC. See their letter, distributed by the Russian news agency ('Georgian Workers and the R.T.U.I.', *Communist Review*, no. 1, 1921, p. 9).

564 RGASPI 534/3/2/11.

565 Letter of 14 December 1920 from Murphy, in *Nachlass Levi*, Folder 181, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

566 RGASPI 534/3/2/43–6.

Heckert whether he could devote himself entirely to the bureau, but Heckert rejected the idea because of his duties in the VKPD *Zentrale*.⁵⁶⁷ At the beginning of June, it was proposed to co-opt Walcher,⁵⁶⁸ and soon representatives from Russia were being sent regularly to take part in the work. In this later period, the element of continuity was represented by the secretary of the bureau, Max Ziese.

The attempt to win over member organisations of the ADGB to take part in the RILU founding congress, already discussed in section 5 of this chapter, was one of the first activities of the Berlin bureau. But it chiefly concentrated on developing a lively journalistic activity. From the beginning of 1921 onwards, it issued a weekly information journal, *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, which had a print run of 100,000 copies, and was partly distributed by the KPD press – as part of the *Kommunistischer Gewerkschafter* – and partly came out independently.⁵⁶⁹ As early as the beginning of February, the task of reprinting the publications of the ITUC, above all *Die Internationale Arbeiterbewegung* [the German edition of *The International Workers' Movement*], was handed over to its Berlin Bureau. The aim was to organise a publishing house for the RILU in Berlin.⁵⁷⁰

The Bureau's sphere of activity was not limited to Germany, however. It also established connections with many neighbouring countries (such as the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and Poland).⁵⁷¹

Although the Berlin Bureau had been set up by the ITUC and was responsible to it, it could rely for support on one of the strongest communist parties in Europe, which already possessed an organised trade-union section. In contrast to this, the situation that confronted Murphy on his arrival in Britain in November was entirely different. The CPGB was still only in the process of emerging, and it was weak. The Shop Stewards' Movement was an equally unimportant

567 RGASPI 534/4/4.

568 RGASPI 534/3/2/64. The bureau had already co-opted Walcher and one other person, independently of this proposal. A dismal picture of the situation of the bureau was painted in the report which gives this information. Rusch and Ziese, it said, were influenced by the oppositional attitude of Levi, Brandler had been arrested, and Heckert had already left for Moscow to attend the RILU founding congress (RGASPI 534/4/2).

569 See Heckert's letter of 11 March 1921 (SAPMO 2/708/46) and *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 30–1.

570 RGASPI 534/3/2/19.

571 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 30–1. See, for example, a report dated 5 March on a visit to Luxembourg, to enquire about the attitude of the local trade-union movement towards affiliation to the Council (RGASPI 534/4/2).

tendency which led a marginal existence alongside the powerful general trade-union movement. Some left trade-union leaders leaned towards Moscow, as individuals. Murphy's financial resources were not insignificant,⁵⁷² and he was able to organise a British Bureau at a conference in Sheffield at the end of December. The Bureau was chaired by Tom Mann, and the other members were Murphy, Robert Williams, A.A. Purcell, Emile Burns, G. Kaye and V. Williams.⁵⁷³ Needless to say, none of these people was delegated by a trade union. To that extent, the Bureau's actual influence was smaller than might appear from the positions some of them occupied in their trade unions. It was also decided to set up an extensive organisational structure, with regional representatives and appropriate publications, and so on, though for the moment they did not even succeed in publishing a journal for the British Bureau itself.

When Murphy returned to Moscow, in March 1921, he discovered that the financial means needed for such a project were not available. This led to impassioned debates at two sessions of the ITUC.⁵⁷⁴ Lozovsky, for example, objected that a movement in a given country should rely for support on what was available on the spot. Murphy's demand for extra funds was rejected. It was also pointed out that in Britain the role of the Bureau in relation to the Shop Stewards' Movement had yet to be clarified (this would not occur until July 1922, some time after the founding of the RILU). In view of this complex overlap between organisations, it is also no surprise that the ITUC missed the miners' strike of early 1921 and the collapse of the Triple Alliance and could only comment after the event, instead of taking the initiative by intervening from Moscow, as was admitted self-critically in its report.⁵⁷⁵

Nevertheless, Murphy considered in retrospect that the British Bureau had successfully performed its task of mobilising trade unionists to attend the founding congress of the RILU. More than '460 trade union branches, 10 trades councils and six district committees of British trade unions' had expressed their support for a revolutionary trade-union international.⁵⁷⁶ The biggest success

572 He brought with him £12,500, of which £2,600 was earmarked for the Shop Stewards, and £5,600 for the establishment of a British Bureau (Beckett 1995, pp. 17–18).

573 As stated at a session of the ITUC (RGASPI 534/3/2/21). The additional names mentioned by Murphy (1941, pp. 167–8) refer either to a wider circle around the British Bureau or to people who joined later.

574 RGASPI 534/3/2/23–40. For the criticisms made there, see *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 65–7. One point made in the report was that Murphy had created 'a ready-made apparatus, which did not grow organically out of the mass movement' (p. 65).

575 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, p. 64.

576 Murphy 1941, p. 172.

was the affiliation of the South Wales Miners' Federation (SWMF), the largest individual section of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.⁵⁷⁷

Little is known of the other bureaux of the ITUC. A Far Eastern Bureau was set up in the town of Chita, in eastern Siberia. At the beginning of 1921, its director Yu.D. Smurgis sent a representative called Fromberg (or Flomberg) to Shanghai, and he endeavoured to exert influence on the nascent Chinese workers' movement, in close co-operation with the local representative of the Comintern. At the end of 1920, trade unions of engineers and printers were already in existence in the city. In summer 1921, a representative of the ITUC by the name of Nikol'sky arrived to take part in the founding congress of the Communist Party of China (Sneevliet participated on behalf of the Comintern). In accordance with a resolution of the congress, a secretariat was set up directly afterwards to co-ordinate the newly emerging trade-union movement over the whole of China.⁵⁷⁸ The ITUC also made contact with Japan (perhaps through

577 Arnot 1975, p. 224; Francis and Smith 1980, p. 30. Because of the date of the SWMF conference, this decision was made four days after the RILU foundation congress had ended. Owing to a 'clerical error', the resolution stated that the SWMF had decided to enter the Comintern. This led Lenin to make the following comment, in a letter of 13 August 1921 to Tom Bell, the leader of the CPGB, written in English: 'It is extremely interesting what you communicate. Perhaps it is the *beginning* of the real proletarian mass movement in Great Britain *in the communist sense* ... If the South Wales Miners' Federation has decided on July 24 to affiliate to the Third International by a majority of 120 to 63 – perhaps it is the beginning of a new era' (Lenin 1965, vol. 32, pp. 510–11). The decision of the SWMF had, however, come too late to be discussed at the conference of the whole miners' union, the MFGB, which took place only a few days later. It therefore came up before the next annual conference, and was rejected there (Francis and Smith 1980, pp. 30–1; Arnot 1975, pp. 224–5. On pp. 227–9, Arnot quotes the speech made by the South Wales miners' leader A.J. Cook in support of the proposal). This rejection was followed by a discussion in the SWMF as to whether they should join the RILU as an individual organisation. They finally abandoned this idea, as it might have led to their expulsion from the MFGB. Even so, the miners of South Wales were represented by delegates at both the founding congress and the second congress of the RILU (Macfarlane 1988, pp. 130–1 and Arnot 1975, pp. 224 and 226–7).

578 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 75–6; A.I. Kartunova, 'Profintern i profsoiuznoe dvizhenie v Kitae (Iz istorii ikh vzaimootnoshenii)', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 1, 1972, pp. 48–59, here pp. 49–51; 'Novye materialy o pervom s"ezde Kommunisticheskoi Partii Kitaia', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 6, 1972, pp. 150–8; A. Kartunova, 'Unknown Participant in the first CPC congress', *Far Eastern Affairs*, no. 3, 1989, pp. 161–4; Tony Saich (ed.) 1991, *The Origins of the First United Front in China: The Role of Sneevliet (alias Maring)*, vol. 1, pp. 56, 70–2 (introduction), 208–13, 306 (documents). The manifesto issued by the secretariat is printed in Jean Chesneaux (ed.), *Les syndicats chinois 1919–1927. Répertoire – textes – presse*, Paris, 1956, pp. 121–5.

Taro Yoshihara).⁵⁷⁹ Continuous relations were maintained with radical minorities in the Japanese trade-union movement in the subsequent period, but for the future RILU these never had the degree of significance possessed by the link with the Chinese trade-union movement.

The American Bureau entered into its activities at the start of 1921. Like the British Bureau, it had provided itself with an extensive structural framework. But owing to the split in the communist party, on which it had ultimately to rely, and the fragmentation of the left trade-union movement, it only gained ground slowly and with great effort. There were immediately conflicts with the IWW, which rejected any kind of work inside the trade unions of the AFL or indeed with them.⁵⁸⁰

The minutes of the ITUC do not tell us anything about the composition of the American Bureau.⁵⁸¹ It was in close contact with the mission sent to America by the Comintern, which arrived early in 1921 in New York, and consisted of Fraina, Sen Katayama (an old Japanese socialist who had spent a long time in exile in America) and the Lettish-American socialist Carl Jansen (or Johnson) who used the party name Charles E. Scott. The main task of this mission was to speed up the merger of the two American communist parties (which took place in May). Another important task was to ensure that a broad-based delegation was sent to the founding congress of the RILU. The leading American communists, who were deeply involved in factional conflicts, lacked cadres with experience in trade-union work. At the suggestion of Cannon, the party leader, they fixed on someone who had not yet played a particularly prominent role in the party, but who would be capable of working with the trade unions. This was Earl Browder, who had just arrived in New York from Kansas. He had been a socialist for many years and he had old-established syndicalist contacts. Katayama accepted him, and he did indeed prove to be capable of carrying out this task successfully. The organisation of the trade-union delegation to Moscow was the start of his ascent in the party, which made him one of the best-known communist party leaders when Stalinism was at its zenith in the context of the Popular Front.⁵⁸²

579 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 76–7. The rich material that came from Japan made it possible to publish a pamphlet which was distributed internationally. German version: T. Nosaka, *Bericht über die Arbeiterbewegung in Japan*, Moscow, 1921.

580 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 69–73.

581 The Council discussed the dispatch of a comrade G. to America on 22 February, and the Bureau's budget and its relation to the communist party on 19 March (RGASPI 534/3/2/22 and 230b).

582 Draper 1957, pp. 269–72 and 307–11. In his unpublished memoirs (*No-Man's Land. A Political Autobiography*, pp. 125–35, Earl Browder Papers 1891–1975, Series 3–144), Browder

For Katayama and Fraina, their stay in New York was only a temporary halt. Their ultimate destination was actually Mexico. The Mexican delegate to the Second Comintern Congress, 'Jesús Ramírez', was already there, having beaten them to it. He was in reality a United States citizen called Charles Phillips, a socialist who had fled to Mexico in 1918 to avoid being called up. Under the name of Frank Seaman he was one of the co-founders of the tiny Mexican communist party at the end of 1919. This party sent him to Soviet Russia as a delegate to the second congress, along with the Indian revolutionary M.N. Roy, who had also taken refuge in Mexico.⁵⁸³ After the end of the Comintern congress, Seaman-Ramírez remained in Moscow at first, but in November he was instructed to go to Mexico with Katayama and Fraina. A bureau of the ITUC was to be set up there. Its main task, in this case too, was to ensure that delegates were sent to the international trade-union congress, if possible from the whole of Latin America.⁵⁸⁴ Seaman-Ramírez was the first to arrive in Mexico, because of the side-trip his two colleagues made to New York.

Although this was not known in Moscow, favourable circumstances had developed in Mexico in the autumn and winter of 1920 for the creation of a radical trade-union movement. In February 1921, an alliance of anarchists,

gave a detailed report on the way he put together the delegation, criss-crossing the country and seeking out old contacts and party organisations. It is an irony of history that Browder was proposed by precisely the party leader who went on to be the founder of American Trotskyism, and was to personify it for many decades, while he himself made the Communist Party of the USA into an obedient instrument of Stalinism.

583 While still in Mexico, they had already been able to make a special kind of connection: they met the Soviet emissary Borodin, who was visiting the country to establish contact between the Russian and Mexican revolutions. Borodin and Seaman-Ramírez travelled together to Europe, arriving first in Spain, where they established links with the left wing of the socialist party. Seaman-Ramírez stayed in Spain for a considerable length of time, while Borodin went on to a conference of the Amsterdam Bureau. They met again in Moscow. This and other information about Seaman-Ramírez comes from his posthumously published memoirs (Shipman 1993), pp. 123–34 of which cover the Mexican episode. See also what is by far the most detailed description of the first phase of Mexican communism, Taibo (1986).

584 Phillips writes in his memoirs that the three comrades were joint representatives of the RILU (or, to be more precise, the ITUC). This is not quite correct, however. The trade-union activities rested entirely on his (Phillips's) shoulders. The joint task of all three of them was to represent the Comintern, and indeed for Katayama and Fraina while they were in the USA the priority was the establishment of party unity. The fact that in Mexico trade-union activities acquired such significance, thanks to the formation of the CGT, could not have been foreseen in Moscow and was a piece of good fortune for the Comintern and Mexican communism.

syndicalists, the Mexican '*administración*' of the IWW, and last but not least communists founded the *Confederación General de Trabajadores* (CGT)⁵⁸⁵ as a rival to the *Confederación Regional Obrera Mexicana* (CROM),⁵⁸⁶ which was connected with the Mexican state, and also with the American AFL in the Pan-American Federation of Labor. Seaman, as he had now renamed himself, was one of the delegates at the founding congress of the CGT. It decided to join the ITUC, and the communist Manuel Díaz Ramírez, who had already been chosen as Mexican communist party delegate to the Third Comintern Congress was named as the CGT's delegate to the founding congress of the RILU.

Katayama and Fraina kept in the background, since after all they did not know the country and they had no Spanish, so the connection with the communist party depended on Seaman and a very small number of insiders. Seaman was the public face of the organisation, particularly in relation to the CGT. Alongside the actual bureau, which consisted of himself, Katayama and Fraina, he also set up a legal branch of the ITUC, under the name *Bureau Mexicano de la Internacional Roja de Sindicatos y Uniones de Trabajadores* [Mexican Bureau of the Red International of Workers' Syndicates and Unions]. He was assisted in this by a representative of the Mexican communist party and by left trade unionists. Seaman's bureau started to publish a newspaper, *El Trabajador*, and issued some pamphlets, including one by Murphy about the ITUC.⁵⁸⁷ But when a wave of strikes took place early in the year, and Seaman and his bureau intervened actively, the regime of President Obregón hit back. A number of foreign activists, including Seaman, were arrested and expelled from the country in May, on the ground that all political activity was forbidden to them under the constitution. Seaman himself, it is true, managed to get deported to Guatemala

585 On the founding congress of the CGT, see Luis Araiza, *Historia del movimiento obrero mexicano*, vol. 4, Mexico, 1975, pp. 56–69 and Taibo 1986, pp. 113–18. See also the sketch of its development in the year of its foundation in Paco Ignacio Taibo II and Rogelio Vizcaino, *Memoria Roja. Luchas sindicales de los años 20*, Mexico, 1984, pp. 111–45, and the general overview in Tamayo 1987, vol. 7, pp. 115–66.

586 On the establishment of the CROM, see Tamayo 1987, vol. 7, pp. 51–114. On the relationship of the CROM to the AFL and the formation of the Pan-American Federation of Labor, see Harvey Levenstein, *Labor Organizations in the United States and Mexico. A History of their Relations*, Westport, 1971.

587 A sketch of Seaman's bureau in the few months of its existence is given by Taibo (1986, pp. 118–22). There are also autobiographical notes by a former member, which also provide a general insight into the revolutionary milieu and the efforts of the CGT to organise. See José Valadés, 'Confesiones políticas', in *Revista de la Universidad de México*, June 1969, no. 10, here pp. 10–16, and see also the same author's *memorias de un joven rebelde*, Mexico, 1985, pp. 103–20.

instead of the United States, where he immediately established some new contacts, but these did not produce any concrete results owing to the backwardness of the country.⁵⁸⁸ After some weeks he returned secretly to Mexico, but he now had to live there illegally.

In the meantime, the 'legal' bureau had collapsed and *El Trabajador* had ceased publication. It reappeared temporarily in autumn but now it was anarcho-syndicalist in tendency. The communists had lost their influence over the CGT, and the party structure had suffered severe damage. To make matters worse for Seaman, Katayama and Fraina had also left Mexico in May, although their departure had been planned, because they needed to attend the unification congress of the two American communist parties. Katayama returned alone to Mexico in July, remaining there until November, when he finally left, this time in the direction of Soviet Russia.⁵⁸⁹ While in the USA, Fraina had apparently been instructed to go to South America. (It is not known to this day whether he arrived there and what he did. His mission probably involved preparatory work in relation to the founding congress of the RILU, but he was at the point of starting the intellectual journey which led him in 1922 to leave the communist movement).⁵⁹⁰ Seaman tried to bring some stability back to the party after his return from Guatemala, among other things

588 See his report from Guatemala: Frank Seaman, 'Freedom in Mexico', *The Liberator*, no. 9, September 1921, p. 25.

589 Taibo 1986, pp. 127–8, 130 and 143–4.

590 See Buhle 1995, p. 96. What Buhle does not mention is that Fraina gave a further sign of life in February 1922 when the bulletin of the RILU published an article by him on Mexico. He was apparently still involved with such activities, although he had not remained in the country. In any case, he joined up with his Russian wife in Germany in the summer or autumn of 1922. He had got to know her in Moscow in 1920, and she initially accompanied him to Mexico, then when he went to the USA in May 1921 she returned there. Fraina informed the Comintern that he had withdrawn from his work with that organisation and they both then went back to Mexico, but they could not make a living there so they returned in 1923 to the USA where Fraina then constructed a new existence for himself as Lewis Corey. Fraina's abandonment of his work for the Comintern in 1922 should be seen against the background of his precarious overall situation. He had been one of the dominant personalities of the young communist movement in the USA. Government agents had, however, spread the rumour that he was one of them, and this was immediately seized upon by his factional opponents in the party. Although the Comintern absolved him from any blame, in several investigations, the decision to send him to Mexico was intended to let things to cool down a little before he was permitted to return to the ranks of the CPUSA. This might perhaps have taken years. So his real situation, for a considerable length of time, was that of one of the Comintern's 'travelling cadres'.

by publishing a new party organ. But his further presence in the country, under conditions of strict illegality and accordingly without any possibility of effective intervention in the movement, was ultimately pointless, as he writes in his memoirs. In the spring of 1922, therefore, he returned to the USA.⁵⁹¹

It was not just the repression that caused the failure of the Mexican bureau of the ITUC, or, as it later became, the RILU. Far more decisive was the confrontation between anarchists and communists in the CGT that would develop after the return of Díaz Ramírez from Moscow in autumn. This had the result that the party broke with the CGT and thus lost most of its influence over the organised workers' movement (see chapter 5, section 2). For a long time, the Mexican communist party would lead a shadowy existence, while the CROM, ironically enough, was repeatedly seen by the RILU and the Soviet trade unions as a negotiating partner, even though contacts with it very quickly turned out to be based on illusions. It was also a problem for the ITUC and its bureau that Mexico was too far removed from the actual centres of the Latin American workers' movement of that time. (This is probably the reason why Fraina was supposed to go to South America in the summer of 1921). As Phillips wrote, 'The fact was that Mexico City could not be an expeditious working center for the Latin American movement as a whole. It lies farther from Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo and Montevideo than from New York'.⁵⁹² Thus the Mexican Bureau remained a mere episode, which the ITUC noted only in passing when it reported to the founding congress of the RILU.⁵⁹³ Fraina did admittedly write at the beginning of 1922 in a RILU publication that the Red International of Labour Unions was already an ideological force in the Mexican workers' movement, even if he had to make the reservation that it was still not an organised force.⁵⁹⁴ But a year later, Roy gave a more realistic, as well as a more striking, interpretation in a letter to a Mexican party leader. He described the Mexican Bureau, meaning Katayama, Fraina and Seaman, as 'cursed' with members who made one error after the other.⁵⁹⁵ Leaving aside the fruitless contacts made with the

591 Shipman 1993, p. 134. He adopted a new identity as Manuel Gómez, but he later broke with the communist party, finally making a career in the financial world as Charles Shipman.

592 Shipman 1993, p. 130.

593 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 73–5. In the report there are also references to Argentina, which had the strongest trade-union movement of all and an active communist party, Chile, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil.

594 Fraina, 'Mexico: Der Kampf um den Anschluss an die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, January 1922, pp. 48–9.

595 Quoted in Taibo 1986, p. 144.

CROM, Mexico would not become significant for the RILU until the latter was in process of dissolution, since up to that point it had concentrated its efforts on the southern part of Latin America.

By using a whole range of instruments – its bureaux, its representatives abroad, the trade-union delegations which visited Russia,⁵⁹⁶ and its manifestos directed at the workers of many countries⁵⁹⁷ – the ITUC endeavoured to establish itself in the international workers' movement. Its major task, however, was the organisation of an international congress to found a new trade-union international. In practice, the new international was already emerging. The foundations had already been laid for an apparatus that would function internationally.

As the above account has shown, close co-operation with the Comintern was of vital importance. The statutes of the ITUC (and also of the Comintern itself) provided for reciprocal representation in their respective ruling bodies. The Comintern put this into effect at the end of November when it delegated Lozovsky to the ITUC (Tomsky had warned of the need to do this in a letter of 26 August).⁵⁹⁸ Murphy had already been sent as a delegate to the ECCI, as appears from a resolution passed by the ITUC at the end of June, after he had temporarily been suspended from that body on account of an allegation made against him, which then turned out to be groundless (see the next chapter).⁵⁹⁹

But concrete co-operation at the level of the apparatus was much more important. For example, the Comintern already had a communications network which functioned internationally, and Tomsky asked the ECCI for its help with this at the end of August.⁶⁰⁰ In October, a committee was set up to co-ordinate the activities of the ITUC and the ECCI. It consisted of Tomsky, Kobetsky (who was the secretary of the ECCI) and Gorbunov. Tomsky represented the ITUC, Kobetsky and Gorbunov both represented the ECCI.⁶⁰¹ There were joint

596 In his article on the ITUC, Jarotsky gives a long description of the delegation from Berlin and the visit of delegations from Czechoslovakia and Romania, but he also mentions 'a whole series of other delegates', without giving any further details (Jarotzki 1921, pp. 343–4).

597 The ITUC's report also prints manifestos it sent to Indian, Argentine and Austrian workers, for example (*Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1922, pp. 133–42 and 149–54).

598 RGASPI 534/3/4.

599 RGASPI 534/3/2/84.

600 RGASPI 534/3/4.

601 RGASPI 534/3/2/9. This is the committee set up in accordance with the 29 September resolution of the CC plenum, as mentioned in note 24. Its minutes are not in the RILU archive, unfortunately.

meetings of this committee with the Narrower Bureau of the ECCI, which ran the Comintern when the ECCI itself was not in session. These meetings concerned the preparations for the founding congress, among other things.⁶⁰² In April, Rozovsky too was delegated to the co-ordinating committee.⁶⁰³ It should also be added that a large part of the financial support for the ITUC was transferred through the Comintern.

The syndicalists had already warned in the summer of 1920 against having too close a connection between the two organisations. This would result in a relation of dependency, they said, which would make the ITUC into a mere auxiliary detachment of the political international. The closeness of the connection fitted in with the ideas of the Soviet communists, and for them it was only logical. It was possible, however, to foresee that the question of independence, in other words the precise nature of the relation between the two internationals, would lead to sharp disagreements, as soon as there were practical discussions about this at the congress, and that the Bolsheviks would again be in confrontation with a broad group of revolutionary trade-union representatives, as had already happened in the summer of the previous year.

8 Towards the Founding Congress: Discussions between the ITUC and the Delegates

When the International Council of Trade Unions had been set up in July 1920, it had been agreed that the founding congress of the new trade-union international would begin on 1 January 1921. Immediately afterwards, however, the organisers had started to have misgivings about the practicality of this date. On 6 August, the ITUC resolved not to officially call the founding congress until information had come in that a sufficient number of participants would attend.⁶⁰⁴ This meant that the appointed date would, as it were, automatically be delayed, since the international trade-union movement had first to be persuaded to send delegates. By the end of 1920, they were speaking of 1 May as a final date.⁶⁰⁵

The drawing up of the congress agenda was also a slow process. Tomskey was instructed at the ITUC's session of 16 December to work out a proposed

602 RGASPI 534/3/2/12.

603 RGASPI 534/3/2/42.

604 RGASPI 534/3/2/8.

605 This was the date given in Berlin Bureau's letter of invitation to the German trade unions. There is no resolution delaying the date mentioned in the minutes of the ITUC.

agenda jointly with the ECCI chairman, Zinoviev.⁶⁰⁶ Characteristically, it was the Comintern which first passed the appropriate resolutions. When it sat on 9 January, the ECCI sent its 'wishes' to the ITUC. It wanted the congress to start on 1 May, invitations should be sent out to all trade unions – or at least tendencies within them – which were 'against the yellow Amsterdam international and for the unification of the revolutionary trade unions', and the agenda should consist of the following points: (1) reports; (2) the trade unions in the period of transition to socialism; (3) trade unions and councils (soviets); (4) workers' control; (5) the relationship with the Comintern; (6) questions of organisation (international strike fund, federalism and centralism, International Trade Secretariats); (7) elections.⁶⁰⁷ When it met on 16 January, the ITUC complied with these 'wishes' and voted to set up a preparatory committee.⁶⁰⁸ Then the CC of the RCP (b), at a meeting on 26 January, suddenly called for the congress to take place earlier than 1 May if at all possible. Tomsky, however, told the ITUC on 1 February that it would preferable to hold the congress even later than 1 May, in order to ensure the widest possible participation. Since Zinoviev also adopted this opinion, the congress was again postponed, this time until the beginning of July.⁶⁰⁹

The agenda was again confirmed at an ITUC meeting on 6 April, with the addition of 'statutes' as a subsidiary point of discussion. Not until 15 April did they decide who was to give the introductory speeches on each point. The list was as follows: Tomsky – the report of the ITUC; Zinoviev – the trade unions and the dictatorship of the proletariat; Brandler or Heckert – councils; Rosmer – the RILU and the Comintern; Murphy – workers' control; and finally Lozovsky – matters of organisation.⁶¹⁰

Yet the political aspect was much more important than this technical side of the preparations. Lozovsky outlined the problems that the Bolshevik leadership would have to face at the congress and the tactics to be employed to

606 RGASPI 534/3/2/12.

607 'Aus den Protokollen des Exekutivkomitees', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, pp. 424–40, here p. 426.

608 RGASPI 534/3/2/15.

609 RGASPI 17/2/56/4; RGASPI 534/3/2/18. The clumsy way in which this postponement from 1 May to 1 July was communicated to the foreign bureaux and the foreign communist parties is shown by a complaint from the VKPD representative Koenen at a meeting of the ITUC on 26 March. The Germans first found out about the postponement on 11 March, he said, and then only through an announcement in the newspaper of the Austrian communists, the Vienna *Rote Fahne*! (RGASPI 534/3/2/33).

610 RGASPI 534/3/2/42 and 50.

deal with them in a memorandum sent to the Politbureau on 29 April.⁶¹¹ Very diverse groupings would be represented there, he said: revolutionary syndicalists, communist-led minorities from national trade-union centres affiliated to Amsterdam, and finally revolutionary trade-union federations (from Russia, Norway, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Italy). To prevent the syndicalists from having a majority, or too large a minority, he proposed that mandates should be issued not to individual organisations but to countries (so that the delegations from a given country would have to divide up their mandates). 'Under such conditions, it will be possible for the different groups representing individual countries to smash the syndicalists and put into effect the proposed resolutions'. The principle of issuing mandates to countries rather than organisations was not new; it had simply been taken over from the Second International.

That was how the big, substantive points of disagreement with the syndicalists were to be decided, above all the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which had already been a subject of dispute at the founding meeting of the ITUC. As regards the relationship between the RILU and the Comintern, Lozovsky proposed that the objective should be clearly proclaimed as the establishment of a unified international. If resistance to this was too strong, they should concede the point and call instead for close co-operation and reciprocal representation in the leading bodies of each organisation. However, no concessions could be made on the syndicalist demand to shift the headquarters of the international to Western Europe, because it was impossible to work outside Russia.

In view of his expectation that the main dispute would be with the syndicalists, the other problems adumbrated in this memorandum were of subordinate importance. Thus he criticised the approach of the British and American 'dwarf parties', who demanded from their trade unions the same recognition of the leading role of the party as the Western European mass parties called for. This was already a foretaste of the tactics that would soon lead to the formation of left currents in the trade unions, such as the Trade Union Educational League and the National Minority Movement. He emphatically rejected the idea of setting up a bureau of the RILU in every country. They should seek support rather from local forces, and restrict themselves to financing publications. This point was clearly a response to the demands Murphy had made in March. Lozovsky finally pleaded with them to play for time in dealing with the International Trade Secretariats. The Secretariats were increasingly

611 RGASPI 5/2/227/1-5. It is not clear from the text whether Lozovsky composed this memorandum on his own account or whether it was agreed beforehand with Tomsky.

leaning towards Amsterdam; but before taking action, the Bolsheviks should wait until they had made further efforts to secure participation at ITS congresses.

In Lozovsky's opinion, these were the main questions on which the party needed to make a decision before the congress. His views were reflected in the international resolution passed by the fourth congress of the Russian trade unions at the end of May. It would also turn out, in the event, that Lozovsky had also anticipated the positions adopted by the communist delegates from other countries, who represented the majority of the forthcoming congress. It was therefore clear, as it had already been in the summer of 1920, that the main confrontation would once again be with the syndicalists. This time, however, the questions in dispute would find a definitive solution.

Lozovsky composed his memorandum at the end of April. Within a few weeks, the first delegates had already started to arrive, particularly those from distant parts of the world, who were no doubt still under the impression that the congress was supposed to begin on the first of May.⁶¹² As a result, detailed conversations and discussions had already started long before the congress opened its doors. Initially, however, they tended to be of an informal character. There was no meeting of the ITUC between 15 April and 25 May. At least, there was no meeting at which minutes were taken. The Russian trade-union leaders were intensively involved with preparations for the fourth trade-union congress, which had its first meeting on 17 May. On 18 May, the CC released Tomsky from his functions in the VTsSPS and the ITUC, as we noted earlier. Responsibility for the smooth running of the congress now suddenly fell onto Lozovsky's shoulders.

On the last day of the Russian trade-union congress, the ITUC started to hold meetings with the first delegates to arrive, who had come from the USA, Britain, Mexico and South Africa. Lozovsky informed them about the resolutions passed by the Russian trade-union congress, a mandate commission was established for the RILU congress, and all the delegates were asked to provide written contributions to the discussion on the questions at issue.⁶¹³ Three days later, there was a 'preliminary discussion for the clarification of opinions', as Lozovsky put it, this time on a much broader scale with more countries represented, and several different tendencies among them.⁶¹⁴ In this context, the relationship between the RILU and the Comintern was the central

612 The Mexican delegation, for instance, already started its journey in the early part of April (Taibo 1986, p. 119).

613 RGASPI 534/3/2/51–3.

614 RGASPI 534/3/2/59–61.

issue. Lozovsky again presented the Soviet demand for a single unified international, but he met with opposition from several directions. Rosmer warned him that the syndicalists would not join in if an independent international were not created. An independent international had been promised at the Berlin conference. Non-communist American delegates similarly advocated independence. But Heckert's comments were certainly more significant. He declared that he tended to agree with Lozovsky, but that for the moment it was necessary to create an independent trade-union international, though it would naturally be 'in the closest agreement with the Comintern', because such an international could rest on a much broader foundation.⁶¹⁵ The other party representatives at the meeting (from the countries of Eastern Europe) said that they were 'in agreement with the Russians and Germans'. In addition, Dimitrov stressed the strict subordination of the trade unions to the party's leadership.

Although this discussion was naturally not as representative as the congress would be, since the circle of participants was determined by the accident of early arrival in Moscow, there could be no doubt about the tendency it revealed. Support for two independently existing internationals came both from the syndicalist angle and from communist trade unionists on the basis of their practical experience. Thus the question of how strong the resistance would be to an attempt to incorporate the trade-union international into the Comintern had now been tested, in line with Lozovsky's earlier memorandum, with a negative result from his point of view. The draft resolutions worked out in the following weeks took this result as their basis. There would be two independent internationals. It would soon appear that even so the endeavour to arrive at a concrete determination of the reciprocal relations between these two independent organisations still provided plenty of material for conflict.

The next few meetings were devoted to intensive preparatory work. The delegates were asked to compose detailed reports on the situation in their respective countries and divided into sections for collective work.⁶¹⁶ Two sessions with representatives of the individual Russian trade unions were held with the purpose of exchanging information, chiefly about the International Trade Sec-

615 See also 'Leitsätze zur internationalen Organisation der Gewerkschaften. Vorgelegt von der deutschen Delegation', *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 20, 4 June 1921. Similar views were also expressed by Dimitrov (G. Dimitrov, 'Kakym dolzhen byt' Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoiuzov', *Mezhdunarodnoe rabochee dvizhenie*, nos. 5–6, May–June 1921, pp. 10–14).

616 RGASPI 534/2/62–3.

retariats. After that, the delegates were summoned to international meetings according to their particular branch of industry. These were supposed to be the first steps towards the formation of the International Propaganda Committees.⁶¹⁷

It was also important to establish Commissions to ensure the technical running and the organisational preparation of the congress. The mandates of the delegates had to be clarified, and norms for representation at the congress had to be established.⁶¹⁸ It was proposed at a meeting of the ITUC on 16 June that the countries of the world should be divided into four groups.⁶¹⁹ They would receive 16, 12, 8 or 4 votes according to their importance. Three large commissions were also established at this meeting, consisting of a representative from each delegation, with the purpose of preparing resolutions on the individual points of the agenda. There were only slight changes in the assignment of speakers for each individual point – one of them being that the removal of Tomsy made it necessary for Rosmer to take over the delivery of his report – but an additional agenda point was added at the suggestion of the international conference of communist women. The title was 'The Female Worker and the Trade Union'.⁶²⁰

The routine preparations of these final weeks before the beginning of the congress were interrupted when, in the middle of June, a copy arrived of the weekly journal *L'Atelier*, issued by the group around Jouhaux in the leadership of the French CGT. This contained a serious accusation against Murphy, namely that he was a long-standing police spy. He had in fact been approached in 1918, as leader of the Shop Stewards' Movement, by a Mr. Brown, who was evidently a member of the secret service, and, after discussing the matter with the Shop Stewards, he had pretended to go along with his suggestions. He then publicly exposed the whole thing by revealing it to a Labour MP. Now the whole story had been dug out again. A joint commission of the ITUC and the Comintern was set up, and it was finally able to demonstrate the groundlessness of the allegation.⁶²¹ Almost at the same time, a similar allegation surfaced against

617 RGASPI 534/3/2/69–71 and 73–4. Only in the case of the transport workers, however, and only because of the pressure exerted by the seamen, did the preparatory work go so quickly that the ITUC was able, on 28 June, before the congress started, to have a discussion about the establishment of an International Propaganda Committee in this branch of industry (RGASPI 534/3/288).

618 RGASPI 534/3/2/72.

619 RGASPI 534/3/2/79–80.

620 RGASPI 534/3/2/63–4 and 82.

621 RGASPI 534/3/2/81 and 84; 534/3/9/16–17. This is how Murphy describes the incident (1941

an American delegate, but he only represented an insignificant group at the congress.⁶²²

The ITUC handed in the budget for the congress to the VTsSPS on 24 June. It came to 350 million roubles, including the costs so far of the translation and publication of resolutions adopted, and even author's fees for articles on the congress.⁶²³ The ITUC, and its Bureau, finally concluded its activities at sessions held on 1 and 2 July 1921. It adopted detailed proposals for the course of the opening session of the congress, to be held on 3 July, and for the composition of the congress presidium, as well as a proposal by Zinoviev to set up a joint

pp. 171–2): 'Lozovsky suddenly confronted me with an article from a French paper in which I was described as a "police spy". Of all places in the wide world which may be described as an uncomfortable spot for anyone challenged in this way, Moscow is that place. The Russians have a method of dealing with police spies which does not leave any room for continued activity. Naturally I was greatly distressed by this turn of events, and insisted upon an immediate investigation. Of course all my work was suspended until I had seen this thing through. A joint commission of the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions was set up ... Fortunately for me, Tom Mann had arrived and was a member of that Commission. Having himself seen every document and knowing every step I had taken in the shop stewards' effort to expose "Brown" he was able to bring all the facts to light and expose the falseness of the charge. The Commission accepted my explanation and expressed the view that while my integrity was not in question they thought both the Workers' Committee and myself acted unwisely in having anything to do with the person "Brown". I agreed' (There are also details in Murphy 1941, pp. 69–73, on the course the affair took in 1918 and an attempt by a Russian White Guard émigré paper early in 1928 to disinter it yet again). At the beginning of August 1921, Fimmen also attempted to bring up the affair again, along with various other alleged scandals involving RILU leaders. (See A. Rosmer, 'Les Mensonges et les Faux de M. Edo Fimmen', *La Vie ouvrière*, no. 125, 23 September 1921).

- 622 Adolf S. Carm, the delegate of the Workers International Industrial Union from the USA, which was the trade union of the DeLeonist SLP, was accused of having given assistance to the state in its repression of the IWW. After holding an investigation, in which the official observers of the SLP at the Third Comintern Congress were also questioned, the commission set up to examine the affair rejected the accusation as part of a factional polemic between the IWW and the CPUSA. Carm was therefore allowed to take part in the founding congress of the RILU. But after it had ended, some alleged evidence was brought forward and he was arrested. An exchange of letters between the RILU and the Cheka now followed. Lenin was informed of the affair and the SLP delegates to the Third Comintern Congress vouched for Carm, with the result that he was finally freed and allowed to leave the country. (RGASPI 534/3/2/85; 534/8/7; *Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaya Khronika*, vol. 11, 1980, p. 312; and the report by the SLP representatives at the Third Comintern Congress, printed in Hass 1949, pp. 153–79, here pp. 158 and 161–2).

- 623 RGASPI 534/3/5.

commission of the Third Comintern Congress (which had been in session since 22 June) and the RILU congress to work out the nature of their reciprocal relations.⁶²⁴

9 The Russian Trade Unions and the International Trade Secretariats, 1920–1

When the International Trade Union Council was established in July 1920, its statutes included an optimistic provision conceding a right of representation to the International Trade Secretariats at the international trade-union congress it planned to call. But in reality the situation was very different. The establishment of the ITUC placed the International Trade Secretariats before the question of 'Moscow or Amsterdam', and they reacted by taking the offensive. They proclaimed that they would have nothing to do with the Moscow trade-union international and that they were committed to the IFTU.

The international campaign of the ITUC had not yet started at this point, and only very vague information initially percolated through to Western Europe. But the existence of the ITUC was clearly apparent at the congress of the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) which met on 20 August 1920 in Copenhagen. The Russians wanted to be present at this meeting. After having participated in the preparatory meeting in Copenhagen in June he had returned to Moscow and discussed the situation with the Russian Metal Workers' Union (see chapter 2, section 4). He was again nominated as delegate. He set out again on the complicated route through northern Norway, but he was prevented from travelling any further, because he had no entry visa for Denmark. He then attempted to enter Sweden illegally, but he was arrested by the Swedish police. He finally had to return to Russia without accomplishing his mission. Four other delegates to the IMF congress, who had travelled to Norway to attend on the original date (which had repeatedly been postponed), waited in Christiania to be granted visas, but they were eventually unable to take part in the congress because they had travelled back to Russia in the meantime, not waiting for fresh instructions. So the international congress of metalworkers' trade unions met without Russian participation.⁶²⁵

624 RGASPI 534/3/2/89–92.

625 This account is based on a memorandum by Shliapnikov, 'O mezhdunarodnykh delakh soiuзов rabochikh metallistov' (GARF 5667/5/38/123–48).

Immediately after the opening of the congress, which took place in the shadow of the Polish-Soviet war, the refusal of the Danish government to issue entry visas was strongly criticised. The Danish metalworkers' leader Hansen, who had assured Shliapnikov in June that he would procure a visa for him, stressed repeatedly that he had conducted 'endless negotiations' without success. One cannot help feeling, however, that this failure was by no means unwelcome to some of the metalworkers' leaders, judging by Schlicke's reaction, for instance. Dißmann attempted to organise an energetic riposte to the Danish government's action, since in his view the congress could not afford simply to accept such a thing. His efforts were in vain.⁶²⁶ Hence the Russian question only occasionally surfaced in the comments of individual delegates. Schlicke, who was in fact removed from office by this congress, attacked Shliapnikov's activities in the spring of 1920. He refused to run after the Russians, he said, and he favoured 'drawing a clear dividing line' between the metalworkers 'and the so-called Third International'.⁶²⁷ Merrheim too explicitly distanced himself from the methods of the Russians, with which it would not be possible, he said, to bring about socialism in Europe. Dißmann, who repeatedly stressed his solidarity with the Russian Revolution, proclaimed just as frequently that the metalworkers were part of the IFTU, and had no desire to promote its break-up.⁶²⁸ This point was directed at the representative of the 'left wing' of the congress, Richard Müller, who had nothing to say about the IFTU (at least in the plenary sessions), but did criticise the congress for taking up an excessively defensive attitude on the issue of the Russian delegates. He put forward a draft resolution demanding that they make an emphatic statement about the Polish-Soviet war and go over to 'direct action'. What was accepted instead was a resolution proposed by Dißmann, Merrheim and the Austrian Stein. This called in general terms for the 'revolutionary class struggle' and the abolition of capitalism as a cause of war. In the case of the Polish-Soviet war, the resolution expressed support for the boycott actions called for by the IFTU.⁶²⁹

This congress was characterised by its purely verbal radicalism. It repeatedly affirmed its commitment to the class struggle and the overthrow of capitalism. But at the same time, leading personalities in the IMF like Merrheim and Dißmann clearly expressed their allegiance to Amsterdam. Organisational questions, however, were at least as important as the political perspectives. There

626 *Der achte Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress 1921*, pp. 28–31.

627 *Der achte Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress 1921*, pp. 39 and 41.

628 *Der achte Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress 1921*, pp. 49 and 50–3.

629 The two resolutions are printed in *Der achte Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress 1921*, pp. 41–2 and 45–7.

was a need to tighten the loose association of prewar times to fit in with the conditions prevailing after the war, and above all to transfer the headquarters of the IMF to one of the countries that had stayed neutral. The congress chose Switzerland.

Although the IMF congress expressed clear reservations about the Russians, its mood was by no means one of unconditional confrontation with them. During the discussion on the shape of the future leadership of the federation, it was precisely Merrheim and Dißmann who declared that the Russians would be present at the next congress, at the latest, and that a place on the Executive Committee must be found for them.⁶³⁰ This ready acceptance can largely be explained by the fact that by August 1920 very little precise information had come out of Russia. As a member of the German delegation wrote in her memoirs, Merrheim did not receive the text of the Twenty-One Conditions of Admission adopted by the Second Comintern Congress until just after the end of the congress. The Twenty-One Conditions called among other things for a struggle against Amsterdam and the creation of a new, red, trade-union international. Merrheim, in a great state of agitation, immediately brought the text of the Conditions to the German delegation, who were about to embark on a ship to make their return journey.⁶³¹ In the subsequent weeks and months, the struggle over the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' flared up and led to an open confrontation. The leaders of the IMF were also engaged in this. To name only the most prominent episodes, Merrheim was involved in disputes at the CGT congress in Orleans (27 September to 2 October), Dißmann at the USPD congress in Halle (12 to 17 October), and both of them at the IFTU congress in London at the end of November.

At the beginning of October, Konrad Ilg, the newly elected secretary of the IMF, made his first approach to the Russian metalworkers' union. The reason for the delay in writing, he said, was that he had had great trouble in finding their address. He had also heard rumours that the Russians no longer wanted to join the IMF, and that they wanted to destroy the Amsterdam International. He warned them against any attempt to split the movement. The Russians should join the existing federations and make their influence felt within them.

630 *Der achte Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress 1921*, pp. 59 and 61. Later on, at a meeting of the Central Committee of the IMF on 27 August 1923, Dißmann stated that Russians would have been admitted as members if they had received permission to enter Denmark to take part in the Copenhagen congress (FES IMB 2146 [a], p. 49).

631 Toni Sender, *Autobiographie einer Rebellin*, Frankfurt am Main, 1981, pp. 165–6.

He asked for detailed information, and he ended his letter with the hope that he would be able to welcome Russian representatives to the next IMF congress.⁶³²

The reply, signed by Shliapnikov, arrived at the beginning of January. It was a mixture of fierce attacks and vehement demands, strung together. By failing to press for his participation, the metalworkers' congress 'was following in the footsteps of the shopkeeper Hansen and the renegade Schlicke' and had behaved with cowardice. It was incorrect to say that the Russians did not want to join the IMF; they were already members. This was the first use of the argument that the St. Petersburg Metalworkers' Union had joined the IMF in 1910 and that the present All-Russian metalworkers' trade union was its successor. In any case, their membership of the IMF would in no way prevent them from continuing the decisive struggle against the IFTU, which was necessary. They were certain that they would participate in the next international congress of metalworkers.⁶³³

With the publication of both a Bolshevik and a Menshevik report on the Russian metalworkers, the member organisations of the IMF were also able to gain an impression of the situation from both sides.⁶³⁴ At a meeting in March 1921, the Central Committee of the IMF then discussed the situation that had arisen. This time the Italian and British members, who had not been present in Copenhagen, also participated.⁶³⁵ Ilg passed on information he had received from Schlicke about the events of 1910, when the St. Petersburg Metalworkers' Union had joined the IMF. That organisation had admittedly deposited money with the IMF, and membership contributions had been taken from it. But part of the money had only been deposited for safekeeping. 'As far as I understand it, this money has not yet been fully returned. My colleague Schlicke does not however want to hand over the amount in question to the new Russian

632 The letter is printed in *Bericht des Sekretärs an den IX. Internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongress in Luzern für die Geschäftszeit September 1920 bis Juni 1921*, Berne 1921, pp. 4–5.

633 Shliapnikov's letter is printed in *Bericht des Sekretärs an den IX. Internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongress in Luzern für die Geschäftszeit September 1920 bis Juni 1921*, 1921, pp. 5–6.

634 Shliapnikov's report is *Bericht des Vertreters der russischen Metallarbeiter an den am 20 August 1920 in Kopenhagen abgehaltenen internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongress*, Berne, 1920. The Menshevik report is 'Bericht über die Arbeitsverhältnisse in der Metallindustrie Soviet-Russlands' (FES IMB 1994). While Shliapnikov's report was issued as a pamphlet, the report which was drawn up after contact with exiled Menshevik trade unionists at the fringes of the IFTU congress was only mimeographed.

635 'Protokoll über die Sitzung des Zentralkomitees und des Exekutiv Ausschusses des Internationalen Metallarbeiter-Bundes, den 15., 16. und 17. März 1921 im Volkshaus in Bern', pp. 79–100 (FES IMB 2008).

organisation, because he received the money at that time as a deposit from a completely different set of people'. This led Ilg to assert that 'formally speaking' the Russians 'no longer belong to the Federation' because they have not paid any membership dues since that time.⁶³⁶ The question of the membership dues was doubtless only an excuse. This became clear in the course of the Central Committee meeting, when Ilg reported that the English and French metalworkers were also very much in arrears with their dues, since they had not transferred any money to the IMF in Germany during the war. He was compelled to add this remark: 'It is unconditionally necessary to clarify this question of membership contributions, otherwise we run the risk that the Russians will justifiably claim that they belong to the Metalworkers' Federation with as much right as the French, as they too haven't paid their dues'.⁶³⁷

It would certainly have been possible to reach agreement with the Russians on a way of making up the missing payments if that had been the only issue. What was at stake here in actual fact was a general settlement of accounts with the communists, in response to their attempt to create a new trade-union international, as was made clear by the discussion. It was Merrheim in particular who sharply pointed out that the Russians did not tolerate free trade unions. He was supported in this by Dißmann, by the British metalworkers' leader Brownlie, and by the Czech Hampl. Merrheim directly fell foul of Buoizzi, the representative of the Italian organisation, the only delegate who attempted to adopt an intermediate position. Buoizzi made it clear that he was not doing this out of sympathy for communism. However, in view of the decision taken three weeks before at the CGL congress to enter the future Red International of Labour Unions, albeit with reservations, he was confronted with the problem that the Italian metalworkers' union would continue to be a member of the IMF while its national centre, the CGL, belonged to an international with a hostile attitude to Amsterdam. When Buoizzi raised the question of what would happen then, Ilg immediately replied to him that it was admittedly possible, but it did not make any difference to their remaining in the IMF. The converse, though, would not be true. According to the resolution adopted by the meeting, membership of a metalworkers' union in the 'Moscow international' was incompatible with membership in the IMF. The general view was that the Russian communists wanted to destroy the Western labour movement. Thus the Russian metalworkers' application for membership in the IMF, which they had looked forward to accepting seven months before, was now explicitly rejected.

636 'Protokoll über die Sitzung in Bern', p. 79. It has not been possible to establish what happened to this money.

637 'Protokoll über die Sitzung in Bern', p. 110.

The Russians' endeavours to join the other International Trade Secretariats were not much more successful. At the end of September 1920, a conference of the International Federation of Bookbinders took place in Berne. The representatives the secretariat invited from Russia, Meller and Mikhailov, had to cross the border illegally, because they were not given permission to enter the country, and they did not arrive until the conference had officially ended. A 'supplementary session' was organised by delegates who were still present in Berne, and at this meeting the Russians called for a break with Amsterdam. As expected, they remained isolated. The meeting sharply rejected the accusation they had raised that the West was dominated by 'yellow' trade unions. The meeting did at least pass a general declaration of solidarity with the 'struggle of the Russian proletariat'. Afterwards, this 'supplementary session' provoked angry replies from the trade unions attached to the secretariat. For instance, the organ of the German Bookbinders, *Korrespondent*, referred to the fate of the Russian printworkers' union, which had been the stronghold of Menshevik influence in the Russian trade-union movement.⁶³⁸

The Russians also arrived too late to attend the congress of the International Federation of General Factory Workers. The prewar secretary of the federation, August Brey, had set up a provisional bureau in July 1919 during the IFTU congress, and this had called a congress of the organisation for the end of October 1920 in Amsterdam.⁶³⁹ The Russian delegation, led by Belen'ky, who was the chairman of the Union of Chemical Workers, did not arrive there until the beginning of December. He also had to travel illegally, but he had the opportunity of meeting not only the new Factory Workers' secretary, Stenhuis, but also the leaders of two other Trade Secretariats which were located in Amsterdam: Fimmen, the secretary of the ITF, and van der Geit of the International Tailors' Federation.⁶⁴⁰

The Russians accused Stenhuis and the provisional bureau of deliberately holding the congress in the Netherlands because they knew that the reactionary Dutch government would refuse to allow them to enter the country legally.

638 *Protokoll der IV. Internationalen Buchbinder-Konferenz in Bern im Grünen Saal, Volkshaus, am 28., 29. und 30. September 1920*, Berne, 1920, pp. 5 and 27–31; B. Schapiro, 'Zur internationalen Vereinigung der graphischen Arbeiter', *Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 7, October 1921, pp. 128–32, here pp. 130–1.

639 On this congress, see *80 Jahre internationale Solidarität*, Hanover, 1987, pp. 26–8.

640 He published two reports on these meetings: 'Die Amsterdamer Gewerkschaftsinternationale bei der Arbeit', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 15, 11 January 1921, and 'Die Dürftigkeit der Amsterdamer Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 1, 9 January 1921.

Stenhuis angrily rejected the accusation. They had not had the impression, he said, that the Russians were interested in coming. He also added this remark: 'It seemed to us that the Russians didn't want to receive any information, so why should we worry about them?' The Russian delegation in its turn denied this assertion. After they had been informed that the congress had already taken place, they asked Stenhuis what kind of relations the International Federation of General Factory Workers had with the IFTU. They received the reply that it had no organisational links, but it did have ideological connections. The Russians were particularly critical of the fact that the headquarters of the International Federation of General Factory Workers was in Amsterdam, which meant, as they put it, that the International Federation was under the direction of the IFTU, and that it was not envisaged that the federation of Russian factory workers would find a place in it.

A discussion with Fimmen led to nothing more than the repetition of each side's accusations against the other. He rejected the claim that the IFTU was a 'yellow' organisation. They had decided to pursue a radical policy, he said, but they had not been able to put it into effect owing to the hesitation of broad masses of workers. Their connection with the League of Nations, a particular object of Russian denunciation, had been overestimated. And as far as the connection with the Second International was concerned, this organisation was in his view defunct. If individual trade-union leaders nevertheless had a relationship with it, that was their mistake. In this discussion, as in other public appearances at this time, at the CGL congress for instance, Fimmen was already beginning to show that he was the 'left-winger' of the Amsterdam International, a man who gave a revolutionary interpretation to the policy of his organisation on the most essential questions, although it soon became apparent that most of his colleagues were not prepared to follow him in this. Nevertheless, as long as the Russians did not meet him halfway, but preferred to mount a frontal attack on the IFTU, his personal position was without significance, since for them he was the defender of Amsterdam.

The last of the big congresses, that of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), took place in Geneva from 18–22 April 1921. This was the ITS about which the Russians were most hopeful. After all, Robert Williams was its president. They planned to send a representative delegation of five, headed by Mel'nichansky.⁶⁴¹ After discussions at a meeting on 26 March, the

641 See Tomskey's comments at a meeting of the ITUC on 26 March 1921: 'At least one of the various Russian transport workers' unions, the union of local transport workers, seems to have received an invitation to the ITF congress' (RGASPI 534/3/2/30 and 29).

ITUC also decided to send a representative of its own. Tomskey thought this was necessary because he regarded Williams as highly unreliable.⁶⁴² After weighing up various possible candidates (including Rusch and Tom Barker), they decided on Murphy, who had only just arrived back in Russia. Now he had to return again to Western Europe.⁶⁴³

But the Russian delegation never arrived in Geneva. It had doubtless been decided that it should not even set out, in view of the political crisis raging in Russia after Kronstadt and the beginning of the NEP. Murphy therefore had to make the attempt to step forth as the official representative of the ITUC on his own.

The general council of the ITF made no advance decision on this point; instead it left it to the discretion of the congress itself. But at the congress there was strong opposition to the admission of Murphy as a delegate. His request was rejected with very few votes in favour. He then attempted to speak from the gallery, and this led to tumultuous scenes. He was shouted down by the delegates and expelled from the conference hall.⁶⁴⁴ Afterwards, Murphy

See also A. Solowan, 'Bilder aus dem Leben der russischen Gewerkschaftsbewegung', *Die Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 3, March 1921, pp. 26–31, here p. 29.

642 In fact the opening of the ITF congress was immediately preceded by 'Black Friday', after which Williams was expelled from the communist party.

643 RGASPI 534/3/2/39–40.

644 The official report of the session, in which the disturbance involving Murphy is not mentioned, is printed in *Bericht über den internationalen Kongress in Genf im Saale der 'Bourse du Travail' vom 18.–22. April 1921*, Amsterdam, 1922, p. 21. There is a survey of the proceedings, based on newspaper reports, in 'Momentbilder vom Internationalen Transportarbeiterkongress in Genf', *Die rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 21, 11 June 1921. Murphy himself gave various different accounts, in 'Der gelbe Kongress der internationalen Transportarbeiterorganisation', *Die rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 17, 14 May 1921, in a letter of 28 April to the ITUC (RGASPI 534/4/4), and in his autobiography (Murphy 1941, pp. 170–1). According to the minutes of the congress, the only delegates who voted for his right to speak were the two who represented the transport workers' union affiliated to the NAS, while his letter of 28 April adds one more supporter, a British delegate. One of the British transport workers' leaders who spoke against him sank so low as to indulge in a chauvinistic sally, by commenting on his surname: 'This Murphy has a good Irish name. He should go to Ireland to make propaganda for the Irish cause. They need him there more than we need him here!' (*Bericht über den internationalen Kongress 1922*, p. 21). Outside the congress, Murphy met Ernest Bevin for the first time, and this is how he describes him in his autobiography, which was written after he had left the CPGB and joined the Labour Party: 'Despite what had happened he was friendly towards me and discussed matters frankly. He said that he was opposed to the formation of a new International and he thought the Russians and those who were

complained that he had waited in vain for Mel'nichansky to appear. 'Otherwise, I am sure we could have altered the situation'.⁶⁴⁵

In the eyes of the communists, therefore, this congress was nothing but a 'yellow' congress, and the resolutions it adopted were marked by merely verbal radicalism and half-heartedness. Nevertheless, Fimmen had succeeded, against some strong opposition,⁶⁴⁶ in pushing through his line that the trade unions could not restrict themselves to fighting for material improvements but must also, after their wartime experience, act politically in order to prevent the recurrence of such a catastrophe in the future. The ITF leadership was mandated by the congress to seek the close co-operation of other trade unions in this endeavour.⁶⁴⁷ This time the congress did not keep a place open for the Russian transport workers' unions. A proposal to get into contact with them was passed to the general council of the ITF for further examination.⁶⁴⁸

All the other Russian trade unions could do was issue appeals to the international trade-union movement. How they did this depended on the amount of information they had and the extent of their previous contacts. In the case of the miners, the action culminated in a proclamation by their congress against the 'yellow' trade-union leaders and an appeal to the next congress of the Inter-

supporting them were making a mistake. In his opinion they should have affiliated to the International Federation of Trade Unions ... Bevin is a man of very definite views. He believes that Socialism comes through the more efficient organisation of Capitalism and the increasing power of organised labour. He holds the view that the stronger the trade unions become the greater the likelihood of the employers coming to terms and ensuring decent conditions for the workers. His concern for the workers is undoubted, his ability to fight their case either in a law court or at a conference table and to secure concessions where concessions are possible is second to none among trade union leaders. He is a great organiser and as ruthless as Stalin with his opponents' (Murphy 1941, p. 171).

645 RGASPI 534/4/4.

646 This is how he was attacked by the leader of the Swedish transport workers, Lindley, a veteran of the ITF: 'Fimmen is an idealist motivated by religious enthusiasm, but what we need above all in the trade-union movement are practical, thinking heads. Fimmen's reports are almost never trade-union reports. They are just anti-militarist propaganda statements. We are trade unionists and not merely anti-militarist propagandists ... There are enough other matters to deal with which are more important and more urgent for us than the constant fight against militarism' (*Bericht über den internationalen Kongress 1922*, p. 18).

647 See the resolutions on 'The Reaction and Militarism' and 'International Cooperation' in *Bericht über den internationalen Kongress 1922*, pp. 15–16 and 20.

648 *Bericht über den internationalen Kongress 1922*, p. 81.

national Federation of Miners to affiliate to the ITUC.⁶⁴⁹ The Russian leather-workers sent a radio message at the end of November 1921 to the three ITSS of the Shoemakers, the Saddlers and the Glovemakers proposing that a joint congress be called for the whole branch of industry, to take place in April in Moscow, to deal not only with the merger of the three ITSS which was in progress, but also with 'the question which is exciting all class-conscious elements of the proletariat of all countries at present': Moscow or Amsterdam.⁶⁵⁰ But this message never reached the ears of the relevant secretaries, as was explained when the Russian representative at the international congress of leather-workers in August 1921 made an angry complaint about their failure to reply to it. He had been invited to the congress as a guest, not in answer to the message, but as a result of an exchange of letters between the Russians and the three International Secretariats in the spring.⁶⁵¹

The Russian printworkers were more cautious in formulating their messages. Unlike the trade unions just mentioned, they had already established contact with the relevant Secretariat, and they now hoped to be able to take part in the international printworkers' congress which was scheduled for 1921 (see chapter 5, section 4). Without putting the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' in the foreground, they issued a manifesto asking the secretariat to inform them of the congress in good time. They also proposed that it should meet in Moscow. Since a congress of the Russian printworkers' union was due to take place in March, they invited the organisations in Western Europe to take part in it.⁶⁵²

The Russian building workers' union approached the Building Workers' International through the medium of a letter sent by Lozovsky in October 1920 during his stay in Berlin. This was a continuation of previous contacts with the German building workers (see chapter 2, section 1). They had decided

649 'Die russischen Bergarbeiter an die organisierten Arbeiter aller Länder!', *Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 3, March 1921, pp. 75–6.

650 'An die Gewerkschaften der Lederindustrie' and 'An den Generalsekretär des Internationalen Verbandes der Schuhmacher und Lederarbeiter, Simon, den Generalsekretär des Internationalen Verbandes der Handschuhmacher, Maler, und den Generalsekretär des Internationalen Verbandes der Sattler und Ledertaschenarbeiter, Sassenbach', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 16, 1921, pp. 362–5.

651 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des gemeinsamen internationalen Kongresses (Vereinigungskongress) aller den Internationalen Sekretariaten der Schuhmacher, Lederarbeiter und Sattler angeschlossenen Organisationen. Abgehalten in Wien am 10. und 11. August 1921*, n.d., n.p., pp. 58, 75–6, 79–80, and 90. For this congress, see chapter 5, section 4.

652 'An alle Berufsorganisationen der polygraphischen Gewerbe aller Länder!', *Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 3, March 1921, pp. 77–8.

to join, they said, despite their many differences of opinion with member organisations. The reply came by return of post. It referred to the call to fight against the IFTU contained in the Comintern's Twenty-One Conditions. So far all they had heard from the Russians were calls for a split. But if they were ready to comply with the statutes of the International, they were welcome to join. The Russians replied to this in April 1921. In turn, the Building Workers' International made the following rejoinder: 'The kind of conception the people who write the letters of the Russian building workers have of working in our international has not met with approval from the trade unions affiliated to us'.⁶⁵³

There were nevertheless more positive reactions from two of the ITSS. They did not rule out Russian membership in advance as impossible. At the international congress of postal workers, there was sharp criticism of the IFTU from the Italians. When membership in the IFTU was included in the statutes, however, it was declared that the Italians must in any case remain within it (it should be recalled that their national trade-union centre, the CGL, was still officially committed to Moscow). The Italian representative in the organising committee of the union addressed himself to the Russians, who were not present at the congress, with an emotional declaration: 'I believe that our congress, which has such a strong sense of sympathy, should also have a thought for those who are absent, the Russians, who are unable to take part in it'. Finally, the official minutes of the congress listed the Russians as being among the organisations which had declared their affiliation by telegram, though without adding any comment.⁶⁵⁴ But further contacts were limited at first to the reproduction of a letter sent by the Russian Esperantist postal workers, who were seeking links with similar groups in the West.⁶⁵⁵

Relations with the International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades (IUF) were much clearer from the outset. The Russians had played no role when the union was established in August 1920, as a result of a merger between the International Secretariats of Bakery Workers, Brewery

653 'Die erste Sitzung des Gesamtvorstandes', *Bauarbeiter-Internationale*, no. 3, January 1921, pp. 30–4, here p. 32, and 'II. Sitzung des Gesamtvorstandes', *Bauarbeiter-Internationale*, no. 6, October 1921, pp. 26–32, here p. 27.

654 *Bericht über den Internationalen Post-, Telegraphen- und Telephonangestelltenkongress in Mailand gehalten vom 31. Oktober bis 3. November 1920*, Vienna, 1921, pp. 9 and 12–26, and 'Unsere Korrespondenz mit den russischen Kameraden', *Internationale P.T.T.*, no. 3, May 1922, p. 143.

655 'Ein offener Brief der russischen Postesperantisten', *Internationale P.T.T.*, no. 1, October 1921, pp. 41–2.

Workers and Meat Workers. There was a guest present at that meeting from the Foodstuff Workers' Industrial Union attached to the IWW, but this was only a chance occurrence. Although the member organisations belonged to a national trade-union centre affiliated to the IFTU, and the International Labour Office was also represented by a guest, the statutes adopted by the IUF did not contain any special reference to the IFTU. What was demanded of the trade unions that wished to join was recognition of the class struggle and the need to replace capitalism with socialism.⁶⁵⁶

Lozovsky had also written to the IUF from Berlin. At a meeting held at the beginning of December 1920, the union's executive decided to get into contact with the Russian union of workers in the food and drink trades.⁶⁵⁷ At the same time, the monthly bulletin of the IUF declared, ironically enough in an article on the London IFTU congress and its decision to draw a clear line of separation from 'Moscow', that they had taken up negotiations with the Russians and were certain that they would join the organisation.⁶⁵⁸

But the first letter sent to the Russians did not reach its addressee, and after a few months it was returned to the sender. At a meeting of the IUF executive in May 1921 in Frankfurt, its secretary, Schifferstein, was obliged to announce this failure to make contact. Other members of the executive, however, reported that they had received information to the effect that a large trade union for food and drink workers did exist in Russia. After heated discussions, the executive came to the remarkable conclusion that the fact that a trade union was a member of the Third International – they evidently made no clear distinction between the Comintern and the ITUC – was in itself no reason to refuse to admit it to the IUF. The only conditions that had to be met were to belong to the appropriate national trade-union centre and to accept the statutes of the organisation. The IUF itself, however, would hold onto its membership of the IFTU.⁶⁵⁹

Neither of these two cases had itself resulted in any definite decision, however. In any case, they could not obscure the fact that the first wave of attempts by the Russian trade unions to gain admittance to the International Trade Secretariats had ended in failure.⁶⁶⁰ Instead, the confrontation over the question

656 *Protokoll IUL-Kongress 1920*. On the history of the IUF, see Nyström and Rütters (1988).

657 Nyström and Rütters 1988, p. 99.

658 'Le congrès international des fédérations syndicales à Londres', *Bulletin mensuel de l'U.I.F.*, nos. 2–3, December 1920.

659 Nyström and Rütters 1988, p. 99, and 'Procès-verbal des délibérations de la 2me séance du Comité', *Bulletin mensuel de l'U.I.F.*, no. 5, May 1921.

660 Further references to the Russian trade unions' appeals to the ITSS are to be found in

'Moscow or Amsterdam' had led the connection between the International Secretariats and the IFTU to become more firmly anchored; indeed, in some cases it had caused them to write it into their statutes. On the other hand, communist minorities within the member unions of the ITSS in Western Europe had been activated, and they were making propaganda for Moscow. In view of the failure of these individual approaches, it fell to the ITUC to organise the process internationally.

The communications section in the ITUC's apparatus had already had a discussion with the individual Russian trade unions at the end of 1920 with a view to making more intensive efforts to get into contact with the ITSS. The organisation of these contacts was now made the central task of the communications section.⁶⁶¹ There was also pressure from Belen'ky, who wrote from Germany in November to the ITUC about his experience there when attempting to speak to the International of General Factory Workers and pointed out the urgency and importance of this problem.⁶⁶² Although an immediate decision was made to examine the question at the next sitting of the ITUC, this did not actually happen until the end of February 1921, after the presidium of the VTsSPS had in the meantime drawn up a balance-sheet of its experience so far, which it did on 11 January.⁶⁶³ It was now decided that all national trade-union associations that had adopted the Moscow platform should take part in their respective international ITS congresses. Where these had already taken place and had declared in favour of Amsterdam (this was of course usually the case), as well as where no congress had yet taken place (not all the ITSS had yet completed their reconstitution, made necessary by the interruption of the First World War), the trade unions affiliated to the ITUC should take the initiative by holding international congresses. At these congresses, new and revolutionary international trade-union associations should be set up.⁶⁶⁴

This line continued to be maintained at a number of subsequent meetings. In April, the 'leading workers' of the ITUC discussed the situation with the chairmen of the individual Russian trade unions and they decided to organise conferences of delegates from each branch of production, in the

the survey of trade-union congresses at the end of 1920 and the beginning of 1921 by A. Solowan, 'Bilder aus dem Leben der russischen Gewerkschaftsbewegung', *Die internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 3, March 1921, pp. 26–31.

661 Jarotzki 1921, p. 340.

662 RGASPI 534/3/2/10.

663 Pankratov 1972, p. 145.

664 RGASPI 534/3/2/22.

context of the founding congress of the RILU, as a first step.⁶⁶⁵ On 3 June, at a meeting between Lozovsky and the Russian trade-union leaders, a concrete proposal was worked out: they would establish International Propaganda Committees, which would have the objective of 'preparing and conquering the trade unions for the foundation of red international trade union associations'.⁶⁶⁶

Until then they had proclaimed that while they wanted to split the IFTU, they did not want to split the International Trade Secretariats. But since one ITS after another had recognised the leading role of Amsterdam, it seemed that they were now inclined to follow a similar path to the one taken in the case of the creation of the ITUC, which led straight to the foundation of a new international. The International Propaganda Committees were expected to work within the existing ITSS, but only with the purpose of replacing them with new ones, which ultimately meant splitting them. If this line had actually been followed in the next few months, it would have very much intensified the fissiparous tendencies in the European trade-union movement, which were already making themselves felt at this time. The optimistic expectation expressed in these directives rested of course on a completely unrealistic estimation of the relationship of forces. If we leave aside the Russian trade unions, the ITUC in Western Europe almost exclusively represented minorities in the big trade unions, of greater or lesser significance. This was quickly made apparent by the stock-taking which occurred when, in the course of May and June 1921, the delegates arrived for the founding congress of the RILU (and also for the Third Comintern Congress, which sat between 22 June and 12 July 1921). At a session of the ITUC held on 13 June with numerous delegates and representatives of the individual Russian trade unions, meetings for various branches of industry were arranged. These included metalworking, mining, clothing manufacture, transport and textiles.⁶⁶⁷

This signalled the start of a further series of industrial branch meetings – fifteen altogether – some of which took place while the RILU congress was still in session, though most of them occurred afterwards. These meetings led in almost all cases to the establishment of International Propaganda Committees (IPCs), which will be discussed in chapter 4, section 8. The metalworkers were particularly quick to agree to this. They set up an IPC after just three meetings,

665 Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 19.

666 RGASPI 534/3/2/69–70. See also Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 21–2.

667 RGASPI 534/3/2/73. Golub and Shilovich give references to further meetings and corresponding discussions in the Central Committees of the individual Russian trade unions (1989, pp. 21–2).

between 14–18 June,⁶⁶⁸ although there was some delay before this body took on its definitive shape as an organisation. The election of a committee was not the least of its tasks.

The transport workers were a special case. The reason for this was the presence of a number of energetic activists, mainly syndicalist in inclination, who were chiefly seamen's representatives. The idea of a red seamen's union had already surfaced at the beginning of 1920. According to Tom Barker's account, the seamen and harbour-workers of Argentina and Uruguay had initially taken the initiative in launching this idea, which had met with agreement from the syndicalist organisations in Europe. Barker had a discussion with Tomsy on the subject after his arrival in Soviet Russia in February. Tomsy was also enthusiastic about the idea at first.⁶⁶⁹ In March, Barker put the same proposal to a congress of Russian transport workers.⁶⁷⁰

The ITUC, however, quickly poured cold water on his ideas. It concluded on 15 April that it was necessary to wait for the result of the ITF congress. Only then could the proposal be discussed. For the moment, he should continue to discuss the matter with the Russian union of transport workers.⁶⁷¹

On 27 April, there was a wider meeting, at which it was decided to call an international congress of marine transport workers, to take place in August in Petrograd.⁶⁷² A resolution signed by Rieger, Tom Barker, Julius Mühlberg (Finnish seamen), Watkins (Shop Stewards), Heron (Irish Transport Workers' Union) and Haywood stated that it was 'certain that the old ITF would fall to pieces'. It would now be possible to set up 'a red international with new and scientific forms of struggle and organisation'. But the fight was less against the ITF than against Havelock Wilson's Seamen's International. The unanimous decision of the Russian transport workers' union to hold the congress was welcomed. The resolution then brought in an idea that would play an important

668 Cf. this survey of the meetings: 'Mezhdunarodnoe ob'edinenie Krasnykh Metallistov', *Biulleten' Mezhdunarodnogo Soveta professional'nykh Soiuzov*, nos. 39–40, 11 July 1921.

669 This account follows Tom Barker's comments at the first session of the council set up to organise the seamen's union, on 28 April (RGASPI 534/5/143/7–10).

670 Tom Barker, 'Address to the Convention of the All-Union of Transport Workers, Moscow', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 6, July 1921, p. 48. The congress in question took place between 22–30 March 1921. It was the first congress of the *Tsektran*, the organisation that covered the trade unions of both the railway workers and the water transport workers between September 1920 and October 1922 (See E. Schachnowski 1924, pp. 27–9).

671 RGASPI 534/3/2/49.

672 'Die internationale Konferenz der Transportarbeiter. Der Kongress im August in Petrograd', *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 26, 16 July 1921, and Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 20.

role in subsequent years: 'The holding of this congress offers at the same time the possibility of creating an important secret organisation which by combining the efforts of the Comintern and the RILU will be able to transport people, literature and information to all parts of the world'.⁶⁷³

The provisional council for the organisation of a trade union of marine transport workers met on 28 April. The session was attended by the above-mentioned people plus two Russian trade unionists, and it heard detailed reports on the situation of the international seamen's movement. Barker strongly criticised the ITUC for placing too much faith in the ITF. An organising committee was set up, and the somewhat colourful proposal was made to hold the congress on a Russian battleship so that 'it would present an imposing image to outsiders'.⁶⁷⁴ A manifesto for international distribution was then agreed. It announced the congress and sketched out its political basis and organisational structure.⁶⁷⁵

The Russians, however, soon started to get ideological 'belly-ache', in view of the dominance of the syndicalist element and the way the congress was based on the professional rather than the industrial principle. At the next session of the provisional council, on 2 May, they brought in a proposal, which was accepted, to hold parallel meetings of the organisations of railwaymen and other transport workers during the seamen's congress.⁶⁷⁶ The ITUC finally considered this question a few days before the opening of the RILU congress. It decided to establish an IPC for transport workers and to transfer the seamen's congress to Moscow. The congress would be downgraded to the level of a mere conference, and it would be proposed that rather than forming its own organisation, it should become a part of the transport workers' IPC.⁶⁷⁷ In May and June, Barker was in England, making preparations for the seamen's congress, contacting oppositional circles in the local Seamen's Union and sending telegrams of invitation all over the world. He suffered the uncomfortable experience of finding that the money promised to him had not been transferred, and on top of that he fell ill and the police were after him. This was all 'discouraging' and 'unpleasant', and it laid the ground for a conflict that would lead in August to sharp confrontations.

It was clear on the eve of the founding congress of the RILU that the attempt to gain influence over the International Trade Secretariats had been unsuccess-

673 RGASPI 534/5/143/1-2.

674 RGASPI 534/5/143/7-10.

675 Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 21.

676 Ibid.

677 RGASPI 534/3/2/88.

ful. They had already made their decision on the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' A start had now seriously been made to become active in this area, however, even if many initiatives were vitiated by organisational weaknesses. Now that the organisation of IPCs had been taken in hand, the Bolsheviks were once again faced with the old dilemma: on the one hand, the trade unions must not be split, but on the other, an *organisational* centre for them had to be created in Moscow.

The Founding Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions

1 The Course of the Congress and the Establishment of the RILU (Profintern)

The founding congress of the Red International of Labour Unions held its first session on 3 July 1921 and continued until 19 July.¹ The agenda adopted on 3 July was extensive. It covered practically all aspects of trade-union activity: (1) report of the ITUC on its activities; (2) the world economic crisis and the tasks of the trade unions; (3) the relationship between the Comintern and the trade-union international; (4) trade unions and factory councils; (5) trade unions and workers' control; (6) unemployment; (7) International Trade Secretariats; (8) questions of organisation; (9) women; (10) elections. However, it turned out to be impossible to keep to this planned agenda.

1 After the end of the congress, a collection of the daily bulletins – sixteen altogether – in which its proceedings were reproduced for the delegates was published as the minutes of the congress, supplemented by a bulletin which documented the establishment of the International Propaganda Committees and, in an appendix, the resolutions and manifestos it had adopted. According to the information given in the RILU press and the published reports of the participants, the bulletin appeared in the four congress languages (Russian, German, English and French). Even so, we were able to find only the first seven issues of the German edition, so it was necessary to fall back on the Russian text. The complete edition appeared under the title *I^{yi} mezhdunarodnyi kongress revoliutsionnykh, professional'nykh i proizvodstvennykh soiuзов. Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moscow, 1921, but since this edition is without pagination it is only quoted here according to the bulletin (*Biulleten'*) numbers. The reports on some points of the agenda were also published in German, and also the congress resolutions were issued as separate pamphlets. The materials in the RILU archive on this congress (RGASPI 534/1/1–14) are very fragmentary. There are neither complete stenographic minutes of the sittings nor complete data on the delegates. Nor is there any documentation on the commissions set up by the congress. As a result, this archive material is of no assistance in depicting the course of the congress. There is one additional source, however. Many of the delegates, particularly members of the syndicalist minority, published accounts of the course of the congress after their return home, and these are a valuable supplement to the official minutes. There is an extensive description of the course of the congress, based on his examination of the minutes, in Resis 1964, pp. 133–228, and the position of the syndicalist opposition is portrayed in Thorpe 1989, pp. 181–200.

The congress was completely dominated by the 'questions which were most passionately discussed', as Nin later recalled.² Just as when the ITUC was founded, these questions derived from the conflict between the communists and the syndicalists. They revolved in part around relations with the reformist trade unions, but much more around relations with the Comintern. The result of these passionate disputes was that a number of points were forced into the background, and were dealt with, as it were, by acclamation, in other words by the plenum's acceptance of a resolution without any discussion. On other matters, the prescribed agenda was altered (for example, in relation to the reports) or new agenda items emerged in the course of the congress.

The congress had afternoon and evening sessions, but it was interrupted again and again by meetings of the commissions established by the plenary meeting to discuss specific points of the agenda. It was also interrupted by the Third Comintern Congress (until 12 July), which is discussed in section 6 of this chapter. The result was that the congress only met in plenary session on a total of nineteen occasions. Lozovsky took pains to ensure the efficient running of the congress, by calling together the plenum punctually, for instance, and this made a positive impression on foreign observers, who had had different experiences in Russia.³ The punctuality of Lozovsky contrasted with the behaviour of some of the delegates at the congress.⁴

What was most important in the discussions can be seen from the fact that no fewer than five sessions were devoted to regulating the relationship between the two internationals, half a session to determining the RILU's tactical orient-

² Nin 1978, p. 83.

³ For instance, William Z. Foster, who took part as an observer, had this to say afterwards: 'Lozovsky is one of the busiest men in Russia, and punctual and business-like in his methods to a degree that shocks all good Russians. It was his custom to open the R.T.U.I. [RILU] congress sessions promptly upon the stroke of the hour set – some of the delegates declared that they corrected their watches by the sound of his opening bell – whereas, in the recent III. International congress, which was run in true Russian fashion, the sessions began anywhere from one to three hours after the appointed time. It is safe to prophesy that under Lozovsky's skilled guidance the Red Trade Union International will soon come to play an important role in the international labour struggle' (Foster 1921, pp. 125–6).

⁴ In fact he issued this warning to the delegates at the third plenary session, after the draft of a manifesto by the congress had been read out: 'We decided yesterday to start our sessions at 11 o'clock. We started our work today punctually at 11 o'clock, although we had to read out the manifesto to a half-empty hall. We shall open all future sessions just as punctually, even if only a quarter of the delegates have arrived' (*Biulleten'*, no. 3). Rosmer would also complain strongly about the nonchalance with which the fiercely oppositional French delegates treated their work at the congress (see the next chapter).

ation – in other words, whether it should establish independent unions or ask its members to work as fractions in the reformist trade unions – and one further session to the concomitant question of organisation, for which the basis was provided by the statutes worked out largely by a committee of the congress. All the other agenda items required less time, with the exception of the Italian question.

A further feature which determined the course of the congress was that it was not a simple matter to establish the necessary apparatus, to publish a bulletin regularly in four languages, three of which were not written in the Cyrillic alphabet, and to organise the work of translation.⁵ Moreover, all these requirements also applied to the Comintern congress. As a result, technical difficulties arising in the course of the congress compelled the organisers to shift the agenda around.

There was another organisational problem, which was admittedly less significant. This arose from the fact that while the overwhelming majority of the delegates were already present when the congress started, a few arrived after several sittings had already taken place. The first report of the mandate commission, issued at the second sitting, on 5 July, gave a total of 310 delegates, but by the time of the final report, at the sixteenth sitting, on 18 July, the number had risen to 380.⁶ The Germans, with 80 delegates, and the Russians, with 69, had the biggest contingents of participants. Behind them, at a great distance, came the delegates from Switzerland and the USA with 15 each.

These numbers referred to the representatives who were present. But this was not the same as the number of votes. Before the congress met, Lozovsky had already worked out a way of preventing the communists from being outvoted by the multiplicity of independent syndicalist unions. The various organisations were not treated separately but combined together in national delegations, and the voting strength of each national delegation was determined in advance. This method, which had already been put forward in the discussions that preceded the opening of the congress (see chapter 3, section 8), was adopted at the second session without a great deal of discussion. Four groups of countries were formed. The first group, consisting of Germany, Russia, France, Britain, Spain, Italy, the USA, Poland, East Galicia and Czechoslovakia, received

5 See Lozovsky's comments at the fifth session, on 9 July (*Biulleten'*, no. 18).

6 See *Biulleten'*, nos. 2 and 14. The mandate commission of the congress, which continued the activities of a commission already established by the ITUC, was elected at the first session. It comprised a solid communist majority alongside a number of syndicalist representatives. But the latter group did not, to all appearances at least, display any differences of approach worth mentioning.

16 votes each; the second group (Austria, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Norway, Hungary, Bulgaria, Australia and Argentina) received 12; the third group (Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Romania, Ireland, Canada, Mexico, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Far Eastern Republic and Azerbaijan) received eight; and the fourth group (all the rest) received four. The criteria for the distribution of votes were twofold: the importance of the country concerned and the situation of its workers' movement. Hence Poland, a country with a strong communist movement and a long revolutionary tradition, was placed on a level with the world's strongest economic power, the USA, which had a very weak communist party.⁷

This voting scheme was already sufficiently arbitrary, and its concrete implementation quickly led to sharp disagreements, in the background of which differing political orientations became evident.

In the case of a Spanish communist, who was active in the Madrid Woodworkers' Union, which belonged to the socialist UGT, and who had initially received a deliberative vote, the mandate commission quickly 'caved in' to the protest of the CNT delegation. His voting power was changed from deliberative to consultative.⁸ The weight of the CNT was so much greater than that of the tiny communist current in the UGT, and the Bolsheviks' interest in the CNT was so intense, that it was impossible for the UGT communist to retain his full mandate.

Other cases were not so simple, and had to be brought before the plenum after hours of deliberations in the mandate commission had failed to clarify them.⁹ Reinstein, who presented the commission's report at this plenary session, endeavoured to play down the disagreements as mere factional quarrels or differences of view over the proper weighting of different groupings within the total number of votes assigned to particular countries, but the element of political confrontation was obvious.

The struggle over a Canadian mandate was symptomatic, although this was one case decided beforehand by the commission and only brought to the plenum for information. The issue here was the representation of One Big Union (OBU), a revolutionary trade-union organisation mainly active in the Canadian West which was attached to the infant Canadian communist

⁷ *Biulleten'* no. 2.

⁸ 'La Delegación de la C.N.T. en Rusia', *Lucha social*, no. 114, 24 June 1922 (this is one of a series of official reports made by the CNT delegation after its return to Spain). See also Meaker 1974, p. 398.

⁹ *Biulleten'* no. 5 provides detailed documentation on the arguments over the mandate question at the plenary session of 9 July.

party.¹⁰ The official delegate, Joe Knight, a communist, was in conflict with Gordon Cascaden, a well-known radical journalist. Cascaden represented the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union organisation in Edmonton. This had split from the OBU the previous year and, unlike that organisation, was influenced by the IWW. Cascaden's mandate was questioned by Knight, partly because the Lumber Workers' Industrial Union was a mere splinter group, but also because Cascaden rejected the official communist view on the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹¹ At first he had only been granted a consultative voice, but this was finally converted into a deliberative mandate, after energetic interventions by the French and Spanish delegates in his favour, and in spite of Knight's protest. The plenum simply accepted this decision without any comment.

But it had itself to decide the dispute over the distribution of mandates in the delegations from the USA and Germany. The US delegation consisted of a number of disparate elements. On the one hand, there was the group organised by Earl Browder in the spring of 1921. This represented the left wing of the AFL, and controlled the mandates of a number of city federations (Detroit and Seattle), in other words local trade-union organisations. Not all members of Browder's delegation were communists, but they stood close to the party or at least were involved in left fractional work in the AFL. Browder's group also included some smaller independent trade unions from New York, led by people firmly attached to the communist party. The opposition to Browder was represented by the official delegate of the IWW, George Williams, who was joined in addition by a number of unofficial delegates who had been sent by local organisations of the IWW because they had not known that the IWW would be represented officially at the congress. The Bolsheviks also brought Bill Haywood into play. He had joined the communist party in the meantime,

10 This organisation seceded in 1919 from the trade-based unions affiliated to the Canadian Trade Union Congress. It developed in confrontation with the IWW. See the fundamental study by Bercuson (1978). Its relation to the Communist Party of Canada is discussed there, on pp. 219–27, and in Angus 1981, pp. 109–13. The union broke with the communist party in 1922, because the latter was following the Comintern line of concentrating on fractional work within the reformist trade unions. It continued to exist as a splinter group until 1956, when it joined the Canadian Trade Union Federation.

11 Later on, Cascaden published a detailed report, full of criticisms of the 'Lozovsky machine', which had, he claimed, manipulated the congress (Gordon Cascaden, *Shall Unionism Die?*, n.d., n.p.). The dispute over his mandate is presented on pp. 52–8 of that pamphlet. He had also opposed the idea of pre-congress discussions, since they anticipated the results of the congress itself (p. 49).

and had come to Russia – as a refugee – together with the official delegation around Earl Browder. Haywood continued to give his support to the IWW, as he made clear in the course of the congress, but he had not only not received a mandate from that organisation, but was also boycotted by it because of his flight from the USA. He had therefore fallen between several stools.¹² In this situation, a fierce quarrel flared up over the distribution of votes, in which the representative of the ‘DeLeonist’ WIU, who was already the subject of grave accusations, was entirely marginalised, since the Wobblies and the communist trade unionists were in alliance on this question.¹³

William Z. Foster, who would play an important role in the RILU in the coming years, was not present at the congress as a formal delegate. Browder had persuaded him to come to the congress, but he was only there as a guest. ‘His visit was notable for its discretion’, as Rosmer wrote. He obviously wanted to wait to see how successful this enterprise would be and had sent Browder ‘in advance to prepare the ground’.¹⁴ The latter intervened noisily as spokesman for the American delegation, while Foster’s official reason for visiting Russia was as a reporter for the radical working-class press. In any case, his trip to that country led him to adhere definitively to the communist movement. He also affiliated the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) to the RILU. This was the quasi-syndicalist association of left-wing trade unionists in the AFL he had founded the previous year.¹⁵

12 Towards the end of the congress, the Bolsheviks brought another Wobbly refugee, George Andreytchine, into play, but the distribution of mandates was by then not so important.

13 See the report by Adolf Carm, ‘Reports from the Red Trade Union International’, *Industrial Union News*, no. 29, January 1922, and no. 30, February 1922. After his protest, he finally obtained a consultative vote, as did the representative of the tiny group of British DeLeonists.

14 Rosmer 1971, p. 139. This discreet behaviour by Foster is probably the reason why Rosmer’s memory proved false here. He claims Foster only arrived after the congress had ended. But his own description of Foster in a letter of 14 July 1921 to Monatte, printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire* 1968, p. 292, contradicts this, and Cascaden (*Shall Unionism Die?*, pp. 32–3) attacks Foster as one of the delegates sent by the communist party. Moreover, Foster describes the congress from the point of view of an observer in his reports from Russia, which were published in book form after his return home (Foster 1921). Years later, as a Stalinist party leader, he gave a short description of the congress in one of his autobiographical writings. He emphasises his conflict with the IWW, underplays his wait-and-see attitude at the time, and turns himself into a delegate (Foster 1937, pp. 138–42).

15 See Johanningsmeier 1994, pp. 160–4, for Foster’s gradual journey towards communism. Another American, William F. Dunne, who was later to play an important part in the trade-

The IWW representative George Williams and a speaker for the delegation organised by Browder now proceeded to exchange insults, accusing each other's group of having no influence on the working class. Williams pointed out that part of the Browder delegation had only come as guests. They were mandated as 'fraternal delegates'. They were only described in this manner, Browder's group countered, because otherwise the AFL leadership would proceed against the union locals in question. In actual fact, only the representatives of Detroit and Seattle¹⁶ could lay claim to a broad base of support back home. All the others represented small branches of AFL member unions (or branches of unions standing outside the AFL). On the other hand, after the many setbacks the IWW had suffered since 1917, Browder was certainly right to question Williams's claim that it comprised between 70,000 and 100,000 members.

The communist-dominated mandate commission finally succeeded in getting the congress to reject Williams's demand for 13 of the 16 available votes. The congress gave him only three votes, while the other 13 were divided among the 'official' delegates. In the final vote on the issue, Williams did not receive support from all the syndicalists. The French, for example, who traditionally supported centralised unions and opposed revolutionary splits, voted unanimously against him. The Spaniards, on the other hand, followed their syndicalist sympathies and voted in favour of the proposal.¹⁷

union work of the CPUSA, was unable to get to Moscow for the congress. He was arrested in Germany while *en route* and had to return to the USA without achieving anything. (See Draper 1957, pp. 316–17).

- 16 For Seattle, see Frank, *Purchasing Power*. Frank's book presents the powerful role of the Central Labor Council in developing co-operatives and enterprises it set up itself. This is described by him as 'labor capitalism'. This kind of approach gave Williams the opportunity to make a further attack, however. The Central Labor Council, he said, was acting in a capitalist fashion and was hand in glove with the state. The Detroit local was dominated by the Proletarian Party, which had emerged from the Michigan Federation of the Socialist Party, but had quarrelled with both communist parties and had not taken part in their reunification. On this, see Allen Ruff, 'A Path Not Taken: The Proletarian Party and the Early History of Communism in the United States', in Ronald C. Kent et al. (eds.) 1993, *Culture, Gender, Race and US Labor History*, pp. 43–57. Ruff's article also refers to a report from the Proletarian Party on the RILU founding congress which is preserved in the archives of the FBI.
- 17 On the discussion about the American mandates, see the account in *Biulleten'*, no. 5. Apart from this, see the remarks of Cascaden, n.d., pp. 24–33 and Williams's report to the IWW (Williams 1921, pp. 4–8, 14–15 and 20–2). In his unpublished memoirs, Earl Browder provides many details about the atmosphere of revolutionary Russia at the time, but he

While the level of conflict about the American mandates hardly corresponded to the amount of real influence either side could lay claim to, the same could not be said of the struggle over the German mandates. Here the communist trade unionists – a minority in the ADGB – were confronted with a variegated spectrum of independent revolutionary unions. They comprised, on the one hand, organisations which actually stood on the periphery of the KPD, but had come into conflict with the party over their insistence on retaining an independent status. This applies to the Free Workers' Union – Gelsenkirchen (FAU-G), the Free Agricultural Workers' Association [*Freier Landarbeiterverband*] and the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain [*Union der Hand- und Kopfarbeiter*]. On the other hand, there was the General Workers' Union [*Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union, AAU*] which was linked to the KAPD, and finally the Maritime Union [*Schiffahrtsbund*] which was attached to the Syndicalists of the FAUD, at least formally. All these unions could hardly be described as syndicalist in the 'ideological' sense, but they did see themselves as revolutionary trade unionists and they were all specifically opposed to engaging in fractional work in the reformist organisations.

The communist delegates claimed to speak in the name of two million members of the ADGB. The mandate commission therefore recommended that eleven of the sixteen German mandates be allotted to them; the remaining five would be divided among the industrial unions. The latter replied questioning the whole idea of membership in the reformist trade unions. These were counter-revolutionary through and through, and the communist cells would simply serve to prop them up. The numbers claimed by the KPD were highly exaggerated, and in any case it would be impossible to create a unified structure within the ADGB. Basing themselves on their official claim of 300,000 members, the industrial unions demanded ten mandates. The communist fraction in the ADGB should receive the remaining six, they said. As was to be expected, the revolutionary industrial unions did not win majority support for their view. The mandate commission's recommendations were only opposed by Spain, Argentina and the Netherlands, with added backing from Cascaden, Williams, and one or two French delegates.¹⁸

only touches on the RILU congress in passing, without even mentioning the struggle over mandates ('No Man's Land', *Earl Browder Papers*, pp. 161–3).

18 On the discussion concerning the German mandates, see, apart from the account in *Biulleten* no. 5, the report of the AAU delegation, 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU vom Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Kampfzruf*, no. 28, 1921, where the AAU's proposal is reproduced. It says, among other things, that 'the delegates of the oppositional trade unions belong in fact to the yellow international. They have been elected by members of the

The French case was in a sense the mirror image of the German one, although it gave rise to far less conflict. The issue here was the mandate of the *Confédération des Travailleurs du Monde*, an organisation restricted essentially to Marseilles, which had split from the CGT. The 'pure' syndicalists and anarchists of the CSR movement rejected its claims. When the mandate commission assigned it a deliberative vote, the French delegation protested unanimously. It doubtless suspected that the admission of the organisation was a Russian manoeuvre, and it was supported in its protest by most of the syndicalists and industrial unionists, even those who otherwise insisted on the rights of the independent groupings. In addition, communist delegates from outside the Soviet area also voted on principle against recognising this mandate. After much confusion, the delegations from the Soviet republics then declared that they had voted for the mandate by mistake. It should be opposed for reasons of principle, they added. With that declaration it was clear that the majority of the congress would also oppose the mandate. The representative from Marseilles received only a consultative vote.¹⁹

All the doubtful cases had now been decided. The syndicalists replied by making a frontal attack on the minority status they obviously had. After the voting had ended, Arlandis of the CNT declared that they were disappointed by the disdain shown for the independent revolutionary unions, adding that the congress had created a 'fictitious' majority. He put forward a motion signed apart from himself by the German industrial unions, the IWW, Cascaden and some of the French delegates. This questioned the credentials of a number of national delegations in principle. They represented agricultural nations, it was claimed, in which trade unions and industrial workers in general were not yet particularly prominent. They should explain to the congress what they actually represented. This motion did not fundamentally question the voting system. But its aim was evidently to remove voting rights from some delegations whose claims were questionable, and this might perhaps have led the existing majority to be overturned. The specific countries Arlandis named were Azerbaijan, Bokhara, Khiva, Turkey, Korea, Palestine and India. Lozovsky made a passionate

trade unions who have not undertaken any obligations by declaring in favour of Moscow. They belong to two internationals and there is every possibility that they will capitulate in the coming conflict between Amsterdam and Moscow. There are already signs of this. The industrial unions, on the other hand ... are independent organisations whose very programme forbids them from belonging to the yellow international, and they have sent their delegates to Moscow with the firm intention of building a genuinely revolutionary communist international of trade unions'.

19 *Biulleten'*, no. 5.

speech against the proposal, 'sharply condemning' Arlandis, and claiming that, for the latter, 'only the workers of the Latin countries are truly revolutionary'. He was able to ensure that the motion was transferred first to the mandate commission for further examination.

A small concession was then in fact made on this point, when in its final report, towards the end of the congress, the mandate commission proposed the establishment of a fifth group of countries which would only have one vote each. This was confirmed by the plenum. The delegations assigned to this fifth group were from Turkey, Korea, Palestine, Bokhara, Abkhazia and Khiva. The delegation from Azerbaijan successfully protested against its inclusion, calling the attention of the congress to the Baku oil workers' long years of struggle.²⁰

In the case of the status of the Italian delegates sent by the CGL, which was one of the founder members of the ITUC, there was a great deal more at stake than merely the distribution of mandates. A representative of the communist minority in the CGL, Repossi, was present from the start of the congress. The USI, which was also a member of the ITUC, had sent two delegates, but they only set off from Italy on 5 July and thus arrived in Moscow after the end of the congress.²¹ This was greatly regretted by the syndicalist opposition, as they had expected them to arrive earlier, which would have reinforced the syndicalist position.²² In any case, after their return to Italy the USI delegates came out in favour of affiliating with the RILU.

At its March congress, the CGL had declared its readiness to enter the RILU on certain conditions, even though it had taken part in the congress of the IFTU held in London in November 1920. A few days before the RILU congress convened, the CGL leadership suddenly proposed by telegram that it be postponed and moved to Reval or Stockholm, an idea that was of course indignantly rejected in Moscow. After that the CGL dispatched two delegates to Russia, Giuseppe Bianchi and Carlo Azimonti, and they arrived ten days after the RILU congress began its sessions.

20 See *Biulleten'*, no. 14. Cascaden (p. 20) gave his comments on the rejection of Arlandis's proposal the heading 'Industry is booming in Peasant Countries', but he, like Williams (1921, pp. 23–5), clearly overlooked this later concession. The Spanish delegation, on the other hand, was aware of it, and after its return to Spain it mentioned the concession as one point, albeit a small one, in justification of the steps they had taken at the congress. This was directed against their anarchist critics back home ('La delegación de la CNT en Rusia', *Lucha social*, no. 113, 3 June 1922, and no. 114, 24 June 1922).

21 Antonioli 1990, pp. 120–1. Antonioli also quotes a comment by Rosmer, alluding to Borghi's late arrival in 1920, that the Italian delegates 'always arrive too late'.

22 Cascaden, pp. 67–8 and Williams 1921, p. 25.

On 13 July, Bianchi made a detailed defence before the congress of the attitude of the CGL leadership, with a view to justifying the Italians' presence there.²³ They were only present as observers, he said, so as to become better informed. Lozovsky replied with a fierce attack, referring to the financial support recently received by the CGL from the IFTU,²⁴ and declaring that in reality the CGL wanted to stay married with Amsterdam while flirting with Moscow. Many delegates agreed with him, while not a single word was said in defence of the CGL, except for short statements by Bianchi and Azimonti themselves.²⁵ In a resolution adopted by acclamation, with no opposing votes and no abstentions, the behaviour of the CGL leadership was condemned and the hope was expressed that its members would ensure as quickly as possible that the CGL take the place in the RILU 'which the revolutionary proletariat of Italy thoroughly deserves'.²⁶ (Instead of that, the next few months would see the CGL's

23 The record of the discussion on the CGL is in *Biulleten'*, no. 8. It was also printed in an Italian pamphlet: *I sindacati italiani al primo congresso della Internazionale dei Sindacati Rossi*, Rome, 1921.

24 This was the 50,000 lire granted by the IFTU (see chapter 3, section 5). The CGL's acceptance of this money had already been emphasised by Zinoviev in his report to the Third Comintern Congress, in the course of his critique of the Italian socialist party, which the leaders of the CGL of course belonged to. 'Moscow gold' was always being denounced by the 'revisionists' and 'centrists', he said. But when they accepted money from the IFTU, which was attached to the League of Nations through the International Labour Office, the leader of the Italian socialists, Serrati, does not notice 'that his fingers are getting dirty. He does not treat the money he has received from these traitors like red-hot coal' (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale. Moskau, 22. Juni bis 12. Juli 1921*, Berlin, 1921, p. 174).

25 Azimonti's arguments contained a contradiction, which none of the other participants brought up, namely that while he associated the membership of the CGL in the RILU with the recognition of the PSI by the Comintern, he also advocated the RILU's independence from the Comintern.

26 The 'Resolution on the Italian Question' can be found in both the minutes of the congress, and *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe*, 1921, pp. 18–20. The German industrial unionists tried to tack on to this vote a resolution calling on all the trade-union sections represented in the congress and still belonging to the Amsterdam international to withdraw from that body: 'The RILU would make itself ridiculous if people were helping to construct it who side by side with this remain members of the yellow international, a situation which could last for many years'. This somewhat transparent manoeuvre, which depended on equating the communist minorities within the IFTU with the IFTU itself, was of course furiously rejected, with reference being made to the discussion on tactics which would decide this issue and which had yet to take place. (See *Biulleten'*, no. 8, and 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU vom Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Kampfruf*, no. 28, 1921).

definitive break with Moscow, not least as a result of this sharp confrontation at the RILU congress).

The CGL was not the only national trade-union centre that attempted to engage in this kind of '*ménage à trois*' at the congress, as Lozovsky put it.²⁷ The Norwegians too, who stood in an organisational relationship with the Comintern through their connection with the Norwegian Workers' Party, had taken part in the London congress of the IFTU. Now, however, although they had not declared their formal affiliation to the ITUC,²⁸ still less left the IFTU, they had come to Moscow. When their nine representatives arrived, after the congress had begun, Lozovsky welcomed them 'from the bottom of his heart'.²⁹ He evidently expected from them a more positive attitude to membership of the new international than the Italians had displayed. As the congress proceeded, the Norwegian delegates made use of their full voting rights without having to answer any questions at all about their relationship with the RILU. That happened after the congress, at a session of the Central Council. But the Norwegian question was by no means concluded there, and it would remain a theme of negotiations for several years (see chapter 5, section 1).

It was characteristic of this whole process of the distribution of mandates that the Bolshevik leadership had very generously equated expressions of opinion and declarations of sympathy for the ITUC with a readiness to organise within it. This was, however, a logical consequence of the fundamental problem they faced in constructing the new international: pro-communist minorities in the IFTU, which rested only on voting behaviour, were equated with solid organisations. This had always been the intended result, it is true. What was questionable, however, was the way a series of national delegations came forward claiming to represent trade-union movements which hardly existed (or, in some cases, could hardly be seen as existing independently of the Russian trade unions). On the other hand, the membership figures claimed by many of the small independent syndicalist unions were highly dubious. Here too the Bolsheviks had been very generous in their acceptance of membership claims. But even if realistic figures had been used in both cases, this would not have altered the fact that the influence of the communists at the congress was greater than that of the syndicalists. It would admittedly have changed the

27 In the preface to *I sindacati italiani* 1921, p. 7. At the congress itself, Lozovsky chose another image, equally accurate: the CGL 'has two passports, or rather, it doesn't have any at all' (*Biulleten'*, no. 3).

28 The ITUC made this criticism in its report (*Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 60 and 102).

29 *Biulleten'*, no. 5.

relation of forces to the advantage of the latter by considerably reducing the overwhelming communist majority.

On the basis of these inflated membership figures, Lozovsky was able to tell the opening session of the founding congress that it represented 16 to 17 million out of the world total of 40 million workers organised in trade unions.³⁰ This was a total which corresponded roughly with the number given in the written report presented by the ITUC of its activities (16,202,000), which also give the individual national totals.³¹ When Rosmer presented the ITUC's report to the congress, however, he left out the overall total.³² By the time the congress met, the figures for individual countries had already risen still further. For example, Turkey had 15,000 members in the written report, but 50,000 in the oral statement, and the French figure had risen from 300,000 to 500,000. At this point, three speakers (Kiraly, Murphy and Bartels) attacked the figures as exaggerated. Lozovsky replied by saying that he had received the data from the relevant representatives. 'If these data are exaggerated, it is the fault of the representatives who provided us with them'.³³

In summary, one can only concur with the verdict arrived at by Resis: 'The membership figures for the RILU are unreliable, on account of the imprecise criteria used to define membership. The so-called opposition movements within the reformist trade unions consisted of actual or presumed communist sympathisers, who were in many cases not formally organised in a group attached to the RILU ... Since the opposition movements were so loosely defined, the data given by the 380 delegates were ... certainly inaccurate'.³⁴

2 Relations between the Comintern and the RILU

The first session of the RILU congress was entirely devoted to the usual preliminaries. After Lozovsky had opened the congress in the name of the ITUC, a presidium, a secretariat and a mandate commission were elected. The rest of the day was spent in hearing welcoming speeches from Koenen for the Comin-

30 *Biulleten'*, no. 1. The figures advanced by the Bolsheviks at the Third Comintern Congress were still more generous. When the congress began, Zinoviev spoke of 15 million workers, quoting Lozovsky; but after two weeks the number had jumped to 18 million (see chapter 4, section 6).

31 *Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921, pp. 78–9.

32 *Biulleten'*, no. 2.

33 *Biulleten'*, no. 3.

34 Resis 1964, p. 125.

tern, Tom Mann for the syndicalists, Rykov for the Russian trade unions, Sirolle for the French and a representative from Germany. The congress agenda was then agreed. It would, however, undergo repeated alteration in the course of the proceedings.³⁵

The next day there was more work to be done to establish the congress on a firm footing by fixing the rules of procedure and distributing voting powers. Apart from this the congress issued a manifesto to the workers of the world and made declarations of its sympathy for the British workers (on account of the miners' strike of the spring) and the Spanish workers (on account of the terror raging in that country). The report presented by Rosmer about the work of the ITUC then allowed the congress to engage for the first time in discussions of specific issues. Rosmer recounted the story of the creation of the ITUC the previous year, and he gave some indication of the path followed since then by some of the founders, such as Robert Williams and the CGL representatives. Finally he gave a positive evaluation of the influence so far achieved by the organisation.³⁶

The fundamentals of Rosmer's report were not questioned in the debate that followed. Some speakers criticised the information given on membership numbers and influence as exaggerated. Murphy alone indicated that there had been differences of opinion in the Council, between the supporters of independent organisation and the advocates of fractional work within the IFTU, and he criticised individual mistakes, such as the manifesto on the London IFTU congress issued jointly with the Comintern. Representatives of the industrial unions and the KPD used this opportunity to engage in polemics with each other about the correct attitude to the reformist trade unions. Finally, a proposal by Lozovsky to set up a commission to work out a resolution approving the report was accepted without any disagreement. This resolution was adopted on the final day of the congress without discussion. A number of delegates found aspects of Rosmer's report controversial but they preferred to raise these questions at the appropriate point of the congress agenda.³⁷

The discussion of a manifesto from the congress 'to the workers of the world', which had been drafted by Lozovsky, gave some idea of the disagreements which were soon to break out. The speakers complained that it was too long

35 *Biulleten'*, no. 1.

36 *Biulleten'*, no. 2. At some point during the congress, a written report was also presented, giving an overall view of the activities of the ITUC (*Bericht des Internationalen Rates* 1921).

37 *Biulleten'*, nos. 3 and 15, and 'Resolution auf Grund des Berichts des Genossen Rosmer über die Tätigkeit des Provisorischen Rats der revolutionären Gewerkschaften für das verflossene Jahr', in *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, p. 17.

and too general, and that it should have been presented for discussion not at the beginning but at the end of the congress. Williams of the IWW gave a specific reason why this should have happened: there were at least two currents of opinion in the congress, and it was necessary first to decide which had the majority. The draft manifesto was therefore returned to the presidium, which finally presented a text which was more concise and less 'rhetorical'. This was adopted without discussion at the last session of the congress.³⁸

One of the difficulties experienced in conducting the congress was that the next point – Lozovsky's report on the tasks and tactics of the organisation – could only be presented in Russian at first. For a discussion to take place, translations into French, German and English had to be made and distributed, and this made it necessary to postpone this item for several days (see the next section). While the initial Russian-language presentation was taking place, Varga delivered a report on the world economy to the delegates who did not understand Russian. This closely followed remarks he had already made at the Third Comintern Congress and was not discussed any further.³⁹

The next session was occupied by the discussion we have already examined about the distribution of disputed mandates (which applied to the USA, Canada, Germany and France), as well as the argument over the attempt to question the credentials of many smaller national delegations. These issues were dealt with by postponing them for the moment, but they offered a foretaste of what would be the climax of the congress: the three-day discussion, between 9–11 July, of the next point on the agenda, 'relations between the Comintern and the Red International of Labour Unions'. What this signified for the communist majority was that if they could not achieve direct membership of the trade unions in the Comintern, owing to the opposition of a considerable part of the syndicalist group, they could at least obtain the closest possible connection between the trade-union international and the international of the communist parties.

The introductory report on relations between the two bodies was given by Rosmer. It had been envisaged, right up to the opening of the congress, that Zinoviev would deliver the main report. But shortly before the congress began, he gave up the idea. He was afraid, quite rightly, that what he said would provoke the syndicalists. The job was therefore handed over to Rosmer, who

38 *Biulleten'*, nos. 2 and 3. The manifesto is printed as 'Der internationale Kongress der Revolutionären Industrie- und Fachverbände an die Arbeiter der Welt', in *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 12–16.

39 *Biulleten'*, no. 4.

was at first unwilling to accept it, but eventually agreed to do so, under intense pressure from Lozovsky, Tom Mann, who helped him by taking on the role of joint *rapporteur*, and Trotsky.⁴⁰

In his report, Rosmer again sketched out the way the ITUC had been set up, explained how it had arisen as a compromise between the conceptions of the Bolsheviks and the syndicalists, and contrasted the traditional views of syndicalism with the position of the Bolsheviks, who wanted the trade unions and the party to act jointly, as evidenced by some of Zinoviev's utterances, which he quoted. On the one hand, Rosmer defended the traditions of the Charter of Amiens, which was, he said, by no means directed towards the adoption of a merely neutral position, as was the case with the German trade unions. On the other hand, however, he sought to make it clear to his syndicalist friends that the Bolsheviks were not a party in the traditional social-democratic sense, but a revolutionary workers' organisation. To that extent their views were not so very different from those of revolutionary syndicalism, as it had developed before the World War. What was involved here, therefore, was not the subordination of the trade unions to the party, but something different. If the bourgeoisie closes ranks, the revolutionaries in the trade unions and the parties must join together to form a unified front. He therefore advocated maintaining an unbroken link between the two organisations.⁴¹

Tom Mann did not add much to what he called the 'exhaustive' declarations of Rosmer. In his contribution, which was more a declaration of war on the reformist 'bourgeoisification' [*Verbürgerlichung*] of the trade-union movement than an examination of the concrete question on the agenda, he simply quoted a few examples from England.⁴²

A total of 23 delegates took part in the subsequent discussion.⁴³ The defence of 'trade union independence' was spearheaded by the French, or, more precisely, by the majority group among the French delegates. Their spokesman on the issue was Sirolle.⁴⁴ He concentrated on French experience, which showed,

40 Rosmer 1971, pp. 136–7.

41 *Biulleten'*, no. 7. Also printed in the pamphlet *Die Beziehungen* 1921, pp. 5–20.

42 *Biulleten'*, no. 5, also printed in *Die Beziehungen* 1921, pp. 21–8.

43 The speeches are printed in *Biulleten'*, nos. 5, 6 and 7.

44 The 'pact' of February 1921, in other words the alliance that the 'pure syndicalists' and the anarchists had made to secure their control over the CSRs had ensured that the French delegation would be dominated by their representatives. Only two members of the French delegation supported Rosmer's line of co-operation with the Bolsheviks. These were Victor Godonnèche, who had already been a delegate at the Berlin syndicalist conference, and Joseph Tommasi. Syndicalist domination of the delegation was made easier to achieve by

he said, that trade unions alone could be genuinely revolutionary workers' organisations. Political parties, on the other hand, were always trying to make the trade unions subordinate and bring them into the parliamentary game. The trade unions must therefore insist on their absolute independence. The co-operation on offer here in Moscow was nothing other than an improved form of subordination, the subjection of the younger brother to the older one.

The tenor of Sirolle's remarks was endorsed by a broad spectrum of syndicalists and industrial unionists of the most varied shades, ranging from the numerous kinds of German 'unionist' to the IWW, from Tom Barker representing the Argentinian and Uruguayan syndicalists to Arlandis of the CNT and Bouwman of the NAS. The opposing view was represented above all by Russians such as Lozovsky, Reinstein, and the chairman of the Russian mineworkers' union, Artem-Sergeev. The Russians were supported by the representatives of the communist parties of the West, for example the KPD and the Communist Party of Poland. For them, the insistence of the syndicalists on absolute independence was a way of evading the demands of the political struggle, which had been placed on the agenda by the revolution. To insist on independence would mean failing to confront the bourgeoisie in a united fashion.

To the careful observer, however, the apparent united front of the syndicalists concealed certain differences of approach. The first speaker in the debate, Arlandis, declared that the Spanish delegation would defend the independence of the RILU, in line with the mandate it had received, and by doing so would

the fact that the congress of the CGT was about to take place in France, and many leading figures of the CSR movement preferred to attend this rather than the RILU congress. The very negative attitude taken in Moscow to the French delegation was not just the result of the position adopted by the majority of its members; it also derived from the impression created by its spokesmen that they were not interested in the proceedings. Rosmer wrote on 13 July to Monatte describing the political difficulties he had with the delegation and adding: 'Moreover, it is impossible to work with them; if one arranges appointments for them they do not turn up, and they are only interested in the congress to the extent that they can speak at it themselves' (*Syndicalisme révolutionnaire* 1968, p. 291). Godonnèche's description of the French syndicalists was even more graphic: 'These are delegates for tourist excursions and the collection of anarchist information' (*Syndicalisme révolutionnaire* 1968, p. 304). And Boris Souvarine, a leader of the PCF who was in Moscow on account of the Third Comintern Congress, wrote to Monatte: 'What is inexcusable is the indifference of the delegates, who go to the theatre and to concerts or stroll along the boulevards seeking pleasure in the evenings instead of sitting at their work and informing themselves in preparation for the next task' (*Syndicalisme révolutionnaire* 1968, p. 320). The behaviour of one of the delegates, Michel Relenk, even led to a scandal within his group (see below).

defend the interests of the syndicalist movement over the whole world. But he ended his speech by saying that he was entirely in agreement with the practical conclusion drawn by Rosmer and Mann, which was that they should strive for a close connection with the Comintern. Bouwman too implied that his attitude was similar, but he then had to add that the whole question of the relationship with 'Moscow' was still fiercely debated within the NAS. Finally, Tommasi, representing the minority group of the French delegation, attacked Sirolle and came out firmly in support of Rosmer and Mann.

Another reason for variations in approach on the part of the syndicalists was that in many speeches the independence of the trade unions was mixed up with the question of independent organisation in general. In these cases, what was involved was not so much the accusation that the trade unions were being subordinated to the party as the refusal to accept an international which had set its face against the movement to withdraw from the reformist trade unions. This only applied to some countries, however, such as Germany and the USA. For France it was irrelevant. Here the revolutionary minority in the CGT saw itself as the real CGT and expected to be able to form the majority soon.

Rosmer was able to point to this contradiction within the syndicalist opposition in his closing speech,⁴⁵ after the arguments had started to become repetitive, with the result that Rykov's motion to end the discussion was adopted.⁴⁶ Rosmer's analysis led him to predict that the opposition would soon disintegrate, but he still had to admit that a 'very sharp, definite split' had emerged at the congress. Finally, he closed by expressing the hope that the resolution proposed would offer sufficient room to manoeuvre, allowing all the organisations represented at the congress to join the RILU.

Rosmer's resolution advocated close co-operation between all the revolutionary organisations of the workers' movement and therefore called for the establishment of an 'organic and businesslike' link between the RILU and the Comintern by means of reciprocal representation in the leaderships of both

45 Printed in *Die Beziehungen* 1921 pp. 28–35. This closing speech was not translated into German, which led to a fierce protest by one of the AAU delegates. He was, however, set to rights by Lozovsky, who was presiding over the session, and who pointed out that almost all the German delegates had already left the hall – for political reasons – and the organisers had not felt able to make a translation for the five or six Germans who were still present (*Biulleten*, no. 7).

46 According to Cascaden (p. 59), this abrupt end to the discussion led to something of a 'riot' among the delegates. There is no trace of this in the minutes, but that does not prove that it did not take place, as another serious conflict towards the end of the congress, which really did happen, as we shall show later, also left behind no evidence in the minutes.

bodies, so as to enable them to carry out revolutionary actions 'in a collective and united manner'.⁴⁷ (It was for the statutes to determine how this would look in concrete terms). In subsequent months, this formula of the 'organic link' would be challenged by many syndicalists. They saw it simply as an alternative way of saying 'subordination', although in fact all that was intended by it was to secure co-operation between the two internationals.⁴⁸ The majority of the French delegation put forward a rival resolution, which declared that the RILU would be completely independent, and also rejected 'ideological leadership' by the Comintern, although it did express a readiness to co-operate 'without any kind of subordination'.⁴⁹

The German industrial unionists now made a transparent manoeuvre aimed at postponing the vote until the Comintern congress had determined its own attitude towards the relationship under discussion.⁵⁰ Nin defeated this with a speech in which he said they must be able to determine their own position independently of the Comintern, otherwise they were simply subjecting themselves to the Comintern's instructions. Now it was possible finally to vote on the two resolutions. The outcome was 287 votes for Rosmer's resolution, and 37 for the opposing one. The defeated minority was made up of the FORA, the NAS, the SAC, the majority of the French delegates, and a minority of the delegates from Germany and the United States.⁵¹

This big voting success showed that Rosmer's resolution had the support not only of the communist delegates but also of some of the syndicalists, those who stood for close co-operation with the Bolsheviks. Rosmer and the other *rapporteur*, Tom Mann, were not alone in coming from this environment. The resolution had been signed by the two minority members of the French delegation, by Joe Knight of the Canadian OBU and, last but not least, Maurín

47 *Biulleten'*, no. 7; *Die Beziehungen* 1921, pp. 35–6; *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 17–18.

48 Rosmer (1971, p. 138) actually viewed the 'organic link' formula as 'uselessly and dangerously provocative'. He predicted that it would give Jouhaux and other reformist leaders a weapon against the minority. But he was unable to get it changed in view of the polarised character of the debates.

49 *Biulleten'*, no. 7.

50 An attempt had already been made once before in the course of the discussion to postpone the vote for this reason. This time the industrial unionists made the additional point that the discussion on tactics had not yet been held. What lay behind this manoeuvre was their special interest in securing the rejection of 'cell tactics'.

51 *Biulleten'*, no. 7. The minutes do not reveal why there is no record of a vote cast by Cascaden, the minority Canadian delegate.

and Nin from the CNT delegation. (It had also received the signatures of prominent communist trade unionists from Russia, Germany and Czechoslovakia). After the vote, Nin spoke for these syndicalists in a declaration by the Spanish delegation which would form the starting-point for a series of position statements from other delegations in justification of the way they had cast their votes. Nin said that the RILU must include all revolutionary trade unions. They could not disavow the centre of world revolution, Russia. If they wanted to achieve co-operation – and they had been mandated to seek this – they must accept its practical consequence, which was the establishment of reciprocal links between the Comintern and the RILU. The other delegations similarly expressed their support for the resolution that had been adopted, with the exception of the Dutch delegation. The NAS had voted against Rosmer's resolution, but they added that they had only voted that way because they had been mandated to do so. Fundamentally, they said, they were in favour of the establishment of a link between the two internationals.⁵²

Thus an alliance between the communists and a section of the syndicalists had been formed, and this fact exerted an unquestionable domination over the further course of the proceedings. As Lozovsky wrote in the preface to the published resolutions: 'This decision on relations with the Third (Communist) International predetermined all subsequent decisions by the congress'.⁵³ The reaction of the 'hard core' of the syndicalists was correspondingly furious. Cascaden later described the decision to break off the discussions after two days as a 'gagging order' by the 'Lozovsky machine', and he reported that the idea now surfaced among the opposition that they should officially withdraw from taking any further part in the congress. This spectacular step was not in fact taken, but for someone like Cascaden the congress had now 'run its course', and he resolved consistently to vote 'no' on all future occasions.⁵⁴ Other syndicalists perhaps reacted simply by losing interest in the congress and withdrawing as individuals. Nevertheless, although the important decision had been taken, there was still the discussion on tactics to be considered. Here the question of independent unions or fractional work ('cell tactics') was to be decided, and thus for at least part of the opposition it was their own identity that was at stake.

Even so, this decision by the congress had by no means conclusively settled the question of relations between the two internationals. The result of the

52 Ibid.

53 *Resolutionen, Statuten* 1921, p. 7.

54 Cascaden, pp. 64–6.

congress, and the voting record of each delegation, the question of whether they had acted in line with their mandate or broken away from it, all became important issues, which caused passionate disputes in the various syndicalist organisations. Their future relationship with the RILU would be determined by the outcome of these controversies. Moreover, when the second RILU congress convened, the resolution adopted at the first one was in fact modified as a result.

3 The Tactics, Organisation and Statutes of the RILU

After this fierce confrontation over trade-union independence, the next few items on the agenda offered an opportunity for a relaxation of the tension, since discussions on these points could not be conducted in terms of a straight conflict between syndicalists and communists. The British communist Tom Bell, who was also a former leader of the Shop Stewards' Movement, delivered the report on unemployment.⁵⁵ No discussion of his report took place, however. A commission was set up for the further examination of the question, although a delegate from the AAU protested vehemently against this. This was not a controversial matter, he admitted, but it was of such importance that it ought to be discussed by the whole congress. It was with precisely this argument that the matter was not controversial, but needed to be illuminated with more information, that Nin, who spoke in favour, successfully persuaded the congress to override the AAU delegate's objections.⁵⁶

No definitive resolution was worked out as a result of the commission's discussions, however. A draft presented by Bell was modified to such an extent that he could no longer recognise what he had written, and he protested against this. It therefore proved impossible to issue the resolution on the last day of the congress, as originally envisaged. Bell made a short report on the matter, from which it did not in fact emerge whether tangible political differences lay behind

55 Tom Bell's report was not published. There is a footnote in the minutes (*Biulleten'*, no. 7) saying that the editors have not received the typescript. This was probably a result of the dispute in the commission on the formulation of the theses. In his autobiography (Bell 1941, p. 240), Bell writes only that he had been instructed to give this report: 'This entailed much research work, discussion in committee, and preparation, so that I was working almost night and day for the three weeks' duration of these congresses'.

56 *Biulleten'*, no. 7. Peculiarly enough, the AAU delegation did not refer to this way of treating the unemployment problem in its report on the congress, though the report otherwise missed no opportunity to criticise the congress majority.

the failure to produce a resolution. In any case, the AAU demanded a vote on the issue, on the grounds that the congress could not simply leave this important question aside. The majority of the delegates did not agree. They accepted instead Lozovsky's proposal to hand over the task of issuing the resolution to the Central Council of the RILU, which was about to be established by the congress.⁵⁷

The resolution which had been confirmed in advance in this way described the significant features of the unemployment problem as it presented itself in the period of conjunctural downswing which followed the end of the postwar boom, and coincided with the RILU congress. The resolution warned against allowing a division between employed and unemployed workers to develop. They would need to be linked together, in 'special committees'. Organisations of unemployed workers 'which were not attached to the RILU' were ruled out. The trade unions must unconditionally support the material demands of the unemployed workers, such as a level of unemployment benefit equal to a full wage, and they must fight against the attempts of the trade-union bureaucracy to marginalise them.⁵⁸

The next two points on the agenda, which were closely bound up together in their subject matter, were also presented through introductory reports alone. Tsyperovich gave the report on workers' control, concentrating essentially on the Russian experience. When the revolution broke out, he said, there had been an economic boycott by the employers. The workers took action against that. Despite a number of false steps, they had finally succeeded in associating these struggles at the factory level with the conquest of state power. This revolutionary conception of workers' control had nothing to do with reformist attempts to involve the workers in the management of capitalist production, such as in Italy after the strikes of September 1920.

Heckert, who gave the other report, dealt with another aspect of the struggle in the factories: the factory councils, or 'economic workers' councils', which had emerged everywhere after the end of the war. They had led the struggle against the way the burdens of war were being shifted onto the shoulders of the workers. The Social Democrats misused them as a means of reaching a 'co-operative arrangement' to preserve the position of the capitalists, but what was needed was to make them into an instrument of revolution. One aspect of the factory councils which was of particular significance was the way they

57 *Biulleten'*, no. 15.

58 'Resolution über die Arbeitslosigkeit', *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 66–9.

could contribute to overcoming the fragmentation of trade-union membership in the factories. This fragmentation was a characteristic feature of the situation in most countries owing to their form of union organisation, based as it was on individual trades. Conversely, the revolutionary trade unions would need to rely on the factory councils as their organs within each factory. An important tactical task, he added, was to make use of the 'legal factory councils' which had been set up in the meantime in many places.⁵⁹

Tsyperovich and Heckert had both attached resolutions to their reports, but in these cases too the resolutions were handed over to a commission. As on the unemployment issue, there were objections to this course of action, in fact the resistance was even stronger than before. Almost a third of the congress delegates – 95 – voted for a discussion in the plenum, as against 205 who supported handing the resolutions over to a commission.⁶⁰

On the penultimate day of the congress, Tsyperovich was in a position to present the finished resolutions to the delegates. He claimed in his accompanying report that there had been no differences of principle in the commission on any point. This was not completely true. One of the Spanish delegates, Leval, had opposed a formulation in which the communist party was described as the vanguard. In a large number of countries, he said, in Spain particularly, the revolutionary syndicalists constituted the vanguard. He submitted an alternative formulation to take account of this. There were also similar objections from a representative of the Gelsenkirchen Union. After their proposals had been rejected, they both withdrew from any further participation in the work of the commission. The changes that were finally adopted related to questions of minor importance; some formulations were expressed more clearly, parts of the text were shifted around, and so on. The two resolutions were finally adopted by the congress, against two opposing votes.⁶¹

After Tsyperovich and Heckert had given their reports, the congress for the first time had the opportunity to close ranks against the two CGL represent-

59 The two reports are printed in *Biulleten'*, no. 8, and they were also issued as a pamphlet: *Produktionskontrolle und Betriebsräte. Referate der Genossen Zipperowitsch und Heckert auf dem ersten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale nebst den angenommenen Resolutionen*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 3–23.

60 *Biulleten'*, no. 8.

61 The minutes of the commission are in *Biulleten'*, no. 13 and Tsyperovich's concluding report is in *Biulleten'*, no. 14. See also Leval's recollections in 'La Delegación de la CNT en Rusia', *Lucha social*, no. 114, 24 June 1922. The resolutions are printed in *Produktionskontrolle und Betriebsräte* 1921, pp. 24–35, and in *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 40–50.

atives who had just arrived, as we have already mentioned. As in the case of the earlier discussions on the organisation of the agenda, subjacent currents of opinion could be perceived in proposals or declarations about procedural matters. But when the congress came to discuss tactics, the issues could no longer be transferred out of the plenum into commissions, but occupied the whole congress for several days. Now the two sides, the communists and the syndicalists, confronted each other in a dispute over matters of principle.

Lozovsky's report on tactics had already been given, just before the discussion on relations between the Comintern and the RILU. He had also presented a draft resolution.⁶² The discussion on tactics had been postponed for the moment until written translations of both documents were available.

Questions of principle, relating to the direction of trade-union activity, underlay the discussion on the matter of tactics. In his report, Lozovsky presented a whole panorama of the international trade-union movement, going back to the prewar situation, when three forms of trade-union action had taken shape: revolutionary syndicalism, Anglo-Saxon 'trade-unionism', and Social Democratic reformism. The war had blurred these stark dividing lines and created new differentiations.

The central thrust of his speech, however, was directed towards syndicalism and its insistence on the independence of the trade unions from politics, as expressed in the Charter of Amiens. Before the war, this principle had had a positive aspect – the fight against reformism – but now, in view of the formation of communist parties, it had become reactionary. He examined the situation of the CSRs in detail and he called on the members of the CSR movement to work out a new programme, more appropriate to the requirements of the epoch. After that, he reviewed the situation in other important countries such as Germany, the USA, Great Britain and Italy, and he then went on to speak about the international syndicalist conference in Berlin. Finally he again summarised his criticisms of the IFTU, concluding by speaking in a very general way about questions of the trade-union struggle, the role of the factory councils and the slogan of workers' control, while referring the delegates to the appropriate points in the agenda. What was most important of all, he said, was a constant 'exchange of revolutionary experiences' in order to make it possible to determine the correct tactics for the future.

62 *Biulleten'*, no. 4. This is also printed in *Aufgaben und Taktik der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Rede des Genossen Losowsky mit der auf dem Kongress angenommenen Resolution*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 5–26, and the draft resolution in *Aufgaben und Taktik der Gewerkschaften (Entwurf des Genossen Losowsky)*, Moscow, 1921.

With this, Lozovsky had given a broad description of the international trade-union movement, which by sketching out its history, its tactical principles and experiences and not least its present condition, was supposed to lay something of a programmatic foundation on which revolutionary trade unionists coming from both the communist and syndicalist directions could find a basis for co-operation. His draft resolution was couched in similarly broad terms. It included sections on the present situation, its historical development and the basic principles of a revolutionary trade-union tactic, which consisted in heightening economic struggles so that they became political. Trade-union neutrality was condemned, whether it took the form of syndicalism or reformism.

The final section of the draft resolution included an action programme for the trade unions. This stretched all the way from the structure of the organisation in the factories and the unions' attitude to fixed wage-contracts, which should be utilised without attaching too much value to them, to a rejection of sabotage and instructions on the way the struggle against strike-breakers and 'White Guard' organisations should be conducted. Resis summarises the gist of the programme in four points: direct action, industrial trade unions, workers' control and factory councils. In this context, he notes the closeness of Lozovsky's conception to the ideas of 'classical' syndicalism.⁶³ Contemporary observers had already remarked on this affinity.⁶⁴ In any case, this action programme was identical, even in its wording, with the programme laid before the Third Comintern Congress (see section 6 of this chapter). Lozovsky's draft also contained a reference to this fact, which would provoke further debates in the commission. The action programme was later widely distributed through the medium of an international pamphlet published under Lozovsky's name.⁶⁵

Extensive as this programme was, one thing was quickly sifted out in the course of the discussion as its central theme: the significance of revolutionary

63 Resis 1964, p. 161: 'All four of these points were also basic principles of revolutionary syndicalism, though the syndicalists interpreted them somewhat differently from the communists'.

64 The Menshevik trade-union specialist Salomon Schwartz made this point, for instance, backing it up with quotations from the action programme, in his article on the RILU in Heyde (ed.), *Internationales Handwörterbuch*, vol. 2, pp. 1348–59, here p. 1350. For Schwartz, an orthodox Marxist in the tradition of the Second International, this was the ideological price the Bolsheviks had to pay for the co-operation of the syndicalists.

65 The German edition is: A. Losowsky, *Das Aktionsprogramme der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, Berlin, 1921, second edition, Berlin, 1922 (reprinted in: A. Losowski, *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, Frankfurt am Main, 1978, pp. 67–173).

syndicalism. Twenty-five delegates spoke, at three sessions, on 14 and 15 July, before Lozovsky was able to make his final speech.⁶⁶

The dispute was not limited to theoretical fundamentals, such as the justification of the connection between Marxism and Proudhonism, two doctrines that, according to Nin, had found a positive synthesis in revolutionary syndicalism. Michel, one of the leading members of the French delegation, made the less ambitious claim that syndicalism was sufficient by itself. Dimitrov, in opposition to this, used uncompromising language to underline his commitment to the Bolshevik experience and the necessity for the political struggle.

These arguments about principles were also connected with the question of whether there should be independent revolutionary trade unions or a concentration on fractional activity within the reformist mass organisations. The question had already surfaced repeatedly and at the beginning of the discussion over tactics it gave rise to passionate debates about the congress's rules of procedure.⁶⁷ It now had finally to be decided. The lead was taken less by the Spanish and French syndicalists, who assumed after all that they formed a majority in their national trade-union movement, than by the 'industrialists', the delegates of the German 'Unions', the IWW and related groups from North and South America. Here, where the question was one of organisation, the communists could make no concessions. Lozovsky always attempted to build bridges for the syndicalists in his contributions to the debate, by admitting that they had been to some extent justified in their attitude in the past, and by proposing for the future a tactic of direct action which was not so very far removed from the practice of syndicalism. But on the question raised by the industrial unionists, it was impossible to compromise. Lozovsky's closing speech could not avoid this question, but he ended by expressing the hope that the syndicalists and the communists could unite. Otherwise, he said, they would be beaten separately and the social revolution would recede into the distant future.

With this, the general discussion on tactics was concluded. But right at the beginning of the next session, on the evening of 15 July, before the congress moved to a vote that would fix the direction of the RILU's trade-union tactics, Lozovsky added a further report, entitled 'Questions of Organisation'. This drew the organisational conclusions which emerged for each country from the

66 The discussion is in *Biulleten'*, nos. 9, 10 and 11–12.

67 The German industrial unionists initially claimed that each of their organisations should have the right to give an introductory address, but they finally accepted that Bartels of the FAU-Gelsenkirchen should speak on behalf of all of them, but be allowed to speak for a correspondingly longer time.

programmatic and tactical questions discussed previously. In this case too, he had produced written theses, which he proceeded to explain and justify.⁶⁸

In his general comments concerning the situation of the international trade-union movement, in his characterisation of the factory councils and the attitude to be taken to the question of enterprise-based or industry-wide trade unions, as well as in his insistence on the task of conquering the 'old' trade unions, Lozovsky was simply repeating what he had said before on many occasions. But then he indicated the tasks which derived from this for the most important countries. In Italy, the USI and the autonomous unions within the CGL should amalgamate into a single section of the RILU. In Britain, and above all in the USA, all attempts to break away from the reformist trade unions should be opposed. The IWW must combine with the other independent organisations and take up work in the AFL. In the case of France, the decision of the admittedly insignificant *Confédération des Travailleurs du Monde* to split from the CGT was condemned, and he called on it to return to the broader movement, adding that the CSRs were making great progress in their campaign to take over the whole confederation. In the case of Spain, the CNT was recognised as the majority national trade-union centre, revolutionary in tendency, with some reservations, and the abandonment of unity negotiations by the leaders of UGT was attacked. But the CNT too was criticised for failing to combine its trade-based organisations into industry-wide federations. In Germany, finally, what was important in Lozovsky's view was to conduct fractional work in the ADGB and to combine the industrial unions with the workers expelled from the ADGB unions. This last point was to prove particularly controversial.

Further sections of the report dealt with the International Trade Secretariats. It was not intended at present to set up any revolutionary organisations to counter these, as they had not yet exhausted all possibilities for winning control of them. The first task was to create International Propaganda Committees. They must certainly oppose the organisation of trade unions on a nationality basis in Eastern Europe. He then examined a number of organisational questions, including the establishment of a revolutionary trade-union press and work among young people. Four conditions for membership of the RILU were defined (this issue resurfaced during the discussion of the organisation's statutes). These were: the revolutionary class struggle must be recognised, the dictatorship of the proletariat must be recognised, the national trade-union centres must break off their connection with the IFTU (in concrete terms, this

68 A. Losowsky, *Die Organisationsfragen. Thesen*, Moscow, 1921. Lozovsky's speech is in *Biulleten'*, nos. 11–12.

rejection of 'dual nationality' as it was described here was aimed at the Italians and Norwegians), and finally all the workers in a particular country who supported the RILU must act in unison.

Before there was a plenary discussion of these issues, all organisational matters were assigned to the commission on tactics, to be discussed there, as they were considered to be logically connected with tactical issues. The independent German 'Unions' now introduced the 'theses on cell tactics' they had announced previously as a resolution.⁶⁹

These theses contained a complicated and in part contradictory set of arguments rejecting the idea of forming communist cells in non-communist trade unions (except where 'undeveloped relations' prevailed). For one thing, it was maintained, this would give communists the reputation of disloyalty. For another, the trade unions, except in the unlikely event that they could be won for communism, were incapable of making the revolution because of the way they were constructed. If they wanted to gain influence in them, the communists would have to adapt themselves to this, and thereby demobilise the workers. For these reasons, the RILU congress must reject cell tactics in the countries of developed capitalism.

The 'unionists', after their resolution had been read out, tried in a somewhat transparent manoeuvre to get it introduced into the discussions in the commission on an equal footing with Lozovsky's resolution. But in view of Lozovsky's argument that the two positions were entirely opposed, they did not venture to put this forward as a point of order. When it came to a vote, 270 delegates supported Lozovsky's resolution, while the resolution of the 'unionists' was supported by 28 people (five from the German delegation, three from the US delegation, and the whole of the Argentinian and Dutch delegations). The Spaniards abstained, and the Belgians, Romanians and Mexicans were absent from the vote. With this majority, the commission had a clear mandate for further discussion of Lozovsky's resolution.⁷⁰

But the independent 'unionists' continued their efforts. In the name of six organisations (AAU, *Schiffahrtsbund*, *Confédération des Travailleurs du Monde*, SAC, NAS and CNT), Bartels of the Gelsenkirchen Union introduced a declaration by which the congress explicitly confirmed the revolutionary character of the independent trade unions and promised not to undertake anything that would hinder their undisturbed development. Lozovsky angrily opposed this, and he read out a factional circular sent by the AAU, the *Schiffahrtsbund* and

69 *Biulleten'*, nos. 11–12. Also printed in *Proletarier*, no. 7, July 1921, pp. 21–2.

70 *Biulleten'*, nos. 11–12.

the Gelsenkirchen Union the day before, which had come into his possession, although it was addressed just to the oppositional groups at the congress. It stated that the independent trade unions had been outvoted by the congress majority, but the path taken by the advocates of 'cell tactics' would lead nowhere. The oppositional groups should work together within the RILU. For Lozovsky, this was a sign that though the 'unionists' demanded solidarity, they themselves were disloyal. Swayed by this argument, the congress rejected the proposal of the six organisations by 216 votes to 13. Lozovsky thereupon declared that his rejection of their proposal did not mean that he wanted to take 'restrictive measures' against the congress minority. Bartels was not given the right to reply at this point.⁷¹ Two days later, on the penultimate day of the congress, he read out to the plenum a declaration by the 'unionists' continuing to insist on their right (and their 'revolutionary duty') to bring together all oppositional forces in the RILU, in view of the adoption of what in their view was the ruinous course of 'cell tactics'. This in turn provoked a counter-declaration by Heckert, to the accompaniment of vehement and noisy interjections, rehearsing the entire catalogue of their deviations, and expressing doubts as to whether any further organisations would ever join them.⁷²

The discussions in the commissions took place on 16 and 17 July. The plenum was not in session on those two days. The general direction of the RILU's work had already been decided in principle. But, to use a well-known phrase, the devil is in the detail. The discussions on the resolution on tactics were therefore dominated by the demands of the syndicalists and 'unionists' for fairer treatment than the wording of Lozovsky's original text had implied. The Spaniards, for example, pushed through a formulation by which revolutionary syndicalism was not characterised, as it had been before, as an anarchist ideology with its accompanying deficiencies, but as an attempt to combine Marx with Proudhon, which the original resolution had failed to recognise. Moreover, Lozovsky's negative characterisation of the syndicalist idea of the independence of the trade unions was softened to some extent. Similarly, the French delegates succeeded in striking out some phrases, in which a reference to the Charter of Amiens as not adequate to revolutionary requirements was ascribed to both tendencies. The slogan of the independent German unions, 'Smash the Trade Unions!', was no longer described as directly counter-revolutionary, but only as

71 *Biulleten'*, nos. 11–12. This circular is also included in a report later issued by the AAU: 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU vom Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Kampfbruf*, no. 28, 1921.

72 *Biulleten'*, no. 14. Bartels's declaration is also printed in 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU vom Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Kampfbruf*, no. 28, 1921.

'standing in contradiction to the interests of the working class', although the 'Unions' themselves were described in very negative terms and the divisions between them were pointed out in the resolution.

When Nin called for the phrase the 'organic link with the communist party in the trade union struggle' to be softened into 'a link with every progressive revolutionary organisation', this was rejected by the majority. And when the Spanish delegates proposed to supplement a paragraph of the resolution by adding that they should make propaganda in the Amsterdam trade unions for affiliation to the RILU even at the cost of an organisational break, only the first half of the statement was accepted. The concession was made, however, of cutting out the statement in the introduction to the section covering the Action Programme of the trade unions that they were following the model set by the Comintern. The intention here was to stress the independence of the RILU.⁷³ Various other alterations involved minor stylistic polishing and giving additional information on the situation in particular countries. An extra paragraph was also inserted in anticipation of the discussion on women and the trade unions which was the next point on the agenda.⁷⁴

The proposals made by members of the commission for changes in Lozovsky's resolution – some accepted, some rejected – were extensive and weighty. In view of this, when Lozovsky presented his report on the work of the commission on the last day of the congress, he stated right at the start that things had not gone smoothly. He made a thorough presentation of the discussions, and having done this he felt able to conclude that they had made the greatest possible effort to find 'a common language with all comrades'. At this point, Arlandis presented a conciliatory declaration, signed by all the syndicalist organisations, which confirmed their desire to work in a joint revolutionary trade-union international, though it also asserted that there were two possible tactics – cell tactics and independent organisations – and that the minority insisted on its rights.

73 Williams was evidently unaware of the circumstances surrounding the removal of this reference to the Comintern. In his report (Williams 1921, pp. 52–4), he indicated numerous passages of the two Action Programmes which were worded identically. He saw in this 'discovery' a further proof that the RILU was under 'political domination'. If the reference to following the model of the Comintern had not been struck out, he would no doubt have argued that this was a declaration of subordination to that organisation. Unfortunately he makes no further comments on the content of this Action Programme. On the other hand, what would he have said if the two Action Programmes had contradicted each other?

74 The discussions of the commission are printed in *Biulleten*, no. 13.

For the Spaniards and most of the other syndicalist organisations, this declaration was intended to justify and supplement their acceptance of the resolution. When it came to the final vote, there were only a few members of the syndicalist camp who voted against it, namely the independent 'unionists', Cascaden and Williams, while some French delegates and the SAC abstained from voting. Before this, the 'Unions' had once again made the fruitless attempt to propose a motion striking out the section criticising them.⁷⁵

The deliberations of the commission which dealt with the resolution on organisation proceeded more smoothly, though they brought a surprising new clash.⁷⁶ Nin strongly objected to the call to participate in the elections to the legal factory councils in Germany and Italy. If they did that, he said, they might as well join the government straight away. He was then forced to listen to a lecture on the distinction between the two spheres of action. In any case, it was said, even the USI took part in the factory councils. A further intervention by Nin, aimed at obliging the communist fractions in the UGT to join the CNT, was greeted sympathetically by Lozovsky, but they decided to leave the matter to the Central Council, to enable it to include representatives of the PCE in the discussion.

The question of how to organise those workers who had been expelled from the free trade unions in Germany now sparked off a bigger controversy. According to data provided by the German delegation, there were almost 7,000 trade unionists in this situation, including two complete local groups (the building workers of Chemnitz and the metalworkers of Halle). Lozovsky supported their inclusion in the Gelsenkirchen Union, to which the other independent unions should also affiliate. Some people feared, however, that this would lead, on the quiet, to the establishment of a new, revolutionary trade-union centre. The German delegation considered this question to be very important, and it had discussed it repeatedly. Heckert had made himself an advocate of Lozovsky's position, though the latter finally also intervened in person. Heckert's argument against the objection that a new kind of independent 'unionism' was being propagated was that if the excluded trade unionists were not included in an organisation, they would be lost to the cause, as they were often not members of the KPD. It was Richard Müller and Heinrich Malzahn in particular who expressed their apprehensions. They were both leading communist activists

75 *Biulleten'*, no. 15. The syndicalist declaration is also printed in 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU', though there it is erroneously described as an additional resolution which was rejected in an extra vote. The final resolution is printed as 'Resolution über die Frage der Taktik', in *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 20–40.

76 The commission's discussions are printed in *Biulleten'*, no. 14.

in the DMV (having come over to communism from the USPD). A clear majority of the German delegation took their point of view (28 in favour, 16 against and two abstentions).⁷⁷ Müller and Malzahn even sent a letter to Lenin on the subject. The latter replied that he was not fully acquainted with the issues and would have to seek further information.⁷⁸ In the meantime, however, it had been possible to arrive at a softer formulation of this section: the independent 'unions' were now described much more negatively, and the task of enrolling the excluded trade unionists in a new organisation was treated as less important than the fight to reinstate them in their original trade union. The RILU's primary orientation towards fraction work in the ADGB was confirmed. The independent 'unions' were also called upon to join that organisation. With this, the controversy over the excluded trade unionists was now settled, though there was still a certain echo of it in the KPD later on (see chapter 5, section 1). For the first time, indeed, the suspicion emerged that Lozovsky might find he was driven by a dynamic which led ultimately to the splitting of the trade unions. This suspicion was voiced again and again in subsequent years, and it finally turned into a reality.⁷⁹

After a few unimportant changes in the text, the commission now examined the question of the International Trade Secretariats. Lozovsky introduced the section dealing with these, saying that they would now need to proceed to the creation of the International Propaganda Committees. After a few months, once a sufficient number of trade unions had joined these, they could then move forward to the establishment of Red International Trade Secretariats.

77 There were a total of four meetings by the German delegation on this subject, which indicates the importance assigned to the matter. Brief minutes of the discussions can be found in SAPMO I 2/708/46. The view of one of the delegates who rejected the Heckert-Lozovsky position is given in Otto Kunze 'Zur Gewerkschaftsfrage', *Unser Weg (Sowjet)*, no. 13/14, November 1921, pp. 391–4.

78 Lenin first read and answered the letter on 20 July, hence after the congress had already come to an end. He did not receive a statement from Lozovsky on the issue until 22 July (*Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaja Khronika* 1978, vol. 9, pp. 61 and 79).

79 In his comments to Lenin about the letter sent by Müller and Malzahn, Lozovsky wrote that they gave no answer to the problem, and their fears were unfounded. But he said more than that. He also described them as supporters of unity at any price. This was the favourite argument used after 1929 against the critics of the RGO (Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition) course, which was aimed at splitting the trade unions. But in 1921, the Comintern was firmly oriented towards work in the mass trade unions, so that the idea of pushing the argument against 'unity at any price' to such an extent would not have entered Lozovsky's head.

This resolution was put to the vote on the last day of the congress without further discussion, after Lozovsky had reported on the work of the commission and in particular the controversy with the majority of the German delegation. It passed by 311 votes to the six cast against by Williams and Cascaden, with three Swedish abstentions (three German delegates and the whole of the Belgian and Austrian delegations were absent).⁸⁰

All these questions relating to the organisation and objectives of the trade unions were related to the RILU's statutes. The decisions were now moulded into organisational rules. The discussion of the statutes, which began on 7 July and ended on 16 July, was conducted directly in the commission, without any initial presentation to the plenum. Here too, Lozovsky had produced a draft.⁸¹ A decision had now been made on the name of the organisation to be founded, and the name was given after the preamble, in the first paragraph of the statutes. Although the title 'Red Trade Union International', or, in the customary English version, 'Red International of Labour Unions', had in fact already been in use for a long time, there were also counter-proposals, such as 'International Workers' Confederation' or 'Revolutionary Trade Union International', though these were widely rejected and had no chance of acceptance. The first received four votes, the second received only one, against 11 votes in favour of the eventual title. An addition proposed by Murphy to the aims of the RILU, which were laid down in the next paragraph, provoked much more discussion. He wanted to add that the trade unions would take over production after the revolution. This was naturally greeted with much sympathy by the syndicalists, but Lozovsky was against the idea, since in Russia the trade unions had just lost their fight over this issue. His counter-argument was that a calm decision should be reached on the matter after the congress, since it was not important for the statutes. A debate flared up immediately on basic principles, in line with the fundamental difference of opinion between the syndicalists and the communists. The communist view was finally victorious.

The discussion on one of the conditions of admission to the RILU also revolved around a principle which was important for the relationship with the syndicalists. This was 'the recognition of the ideological leadership of the Communist International'. Lozovsky himself proposed that this phrase should be struck out, but one can assume that the syndicalists had already given him to understand that it was unacceptable for them. Nin, for instance, put this same

80 *Biulleten'*, no. 15.

81 *Statut des Internationalen Rates der revolutionären Gewerkschaften. Projekt des Gen. A. Lozowsky*, Moscow, 1921.

argument in the commission, supported by Murphy and Godonnèche. Interestingly, however, there were objections to its removal from a number of communist trade unionists who wanted to keep the phrase. When it came to a vote on the issue, Lozovsky only just had a majority, thanks to the syndicalists and a small number of communists, over the representatives of Bulgaria, Finland, Poland, Hungary and Germany. Here, as in some other decisions previously made in the commission, it was evident that Lozovsky wanted to build bridges for the syndicalists by making sure that the organisational independence of the new international was stressed, notwithstanding its close association with the Comintern.

The other disputed points dealt with by this commission concerned matters of drafting and the way the organisation would be structured in concrete terms, and we can ignore them here. The end result was that the RILU (which was conceived as a continuation of the organisation already created by the ITUC) was constructed in the following manner: its highest organ was the congress, which was elected by the members, whether trade-union organisations or minorities within trade unions. The delegates would join together for this purpose in national delegations. The leading body was the Central Council, which would be composed of representatives of the member countries elected according to a fixed formula. This would meet at least twice a year (this degree of frequency was never in fact achieved). The Central Council would elect an Executive Bureau of seven people for the day-to-day conduct of business.

Further provisions embodied in the statutes related to the income of the RILU, which was to be provided by members' contributions. Expenditure was to be checked by a committee. The RILU would have two press organs, a journal and a bulletin. It would be divided into sections, and the Executive Bureau would have an apparatus. The original draft of the statutes provided for an international strike fund, but after the discussion in the commission this was given the more modest form of an international solidarity fund for the support of 'revolutionary struggles'.

The statutes also included regulations covering the RILU's relationship with the ITSS, though this relationship was merely an aspiration, and the regulations remained restricted to the International Propaganda Committees. The RILU's relationships with the International of Revolutionary Consumers' Cooperatives and finally the Comintern were also regulated. The relationship with the Comintern had been discussed at an earlier point in the congress, and the discussion had ended with the decision to establish an 'organic link'. The discussion on the statutes would no longer make a difference to this. Nevertheless, Dimitrov proposed that the number of representatives of the RILU to

be admitted to the ECCI should be raised from one – the figure in the draft statutes – to three. This was ultimately of symbolic rather than real significance, but it did bring home to the syndicalists the extent of their defeat over a matter they had regarded as decisively important.⁸² Curiously, there were no regulations issued governing the converse case, representation of the Comintern in the RILU, which here would mean representation of the ECCI in the Central Council. This was certainly not because Lozovsky forgot to include them. He evidently did not want to provoke any fresh syndicalist resistance. Since the matter had already been decided in principle, its concrete implementation could be taken in hand in peace and quiet after the congress was over.

It was in fact precisely this regulation on the inclusion of representatives of the RILU in the Comintern which some of the syndicalists used to justify their refusal to support the statutes when the vote was taken on the penultimate day of the congress. The negative votes came from the independent German ‘unions’, the SAC, some of the French delegates, Díaz Ramírez, Tom Barker and Robert Williams, while the other syndicalists (the CNT and the rest of the French delegates) voted in favour. This was not just a matter of sticking consistently to a decision previously arrived at. One Polish delegate could not help saying that he had voted in favour despite the removal of the phrase about the ‘ideological leadership’ of the Comintern. Lozovsky gave a thorough report on the work of the commission, and he managed to prevent the congress from raising the individual points of difference yet again by stressing the provisional character of the statutes, which would certainly be changed at the next congress in the light of experience. They were then accepted by the congress. There were 301 votes in favour, 23 against, and 11 abstentions. The question of the headquarters of the RILU was left open by the statutes, but a supplementary motion by the French delegation establishing Moscow as the seat of the Executive Bureau, at least until the next congress, and as the location of the congress itself, was adopted unanimously.⁸³

With the acceptance of these three documents, the theses on tactics, the theses on organisation and the statutes, the grand controversies with the syndicalists had now been concluded. They had led to a number of concessions on the part of the communists, who recognised the syndicalists as revolutionaries, conceded that they had a certain historical justification as against the reform-

82 The discussions in this commission are printed in *Biulleten'*, no. 13.

83 *Biulleten'*, no. 14. The text of the statutes is printed in *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 70–7.

ists, and allowed the revolutionary trade-union international to be organisationally independent. But these concessions had their limits both when the role of the party was put in question, and when the syndicalists tried to present themselves as equal in rights and significance with the communist party. The objective of the policies pursued by the Bolsheviks was to win over that part of the syndicalist movement which was not completely anarchist in tendency to work together with them by making organisational concessions. In the last instance, this would lead the syndicalists to join the communist parties, and indeed in some countries this was the only way the latter were able to become revolutionary mass parties at all.⁸⁴

4 The First RILU Congress Draws to a Conclusion

The activities of the founding congress of the RILU predominantly revolved around the discussions with the syndicalists over the broad strategic and programmatic orientation of the organisation. Even in the context of the resolution on tactics, the action programme which formed part of it, and in which Lozovsky indicated the attitude to be followed towards key questions of day-to-day trade-union work, did not give rise to any debate. The discussions at the congress were entirely dominated by the conflict over the existence of independent revolutionary trade unions. Finally, in the closing days of the congress, one or two other concrete points were treated, though this was done hastily, without any plenary discussion, in reports which had already been discussed to some extent in the commissions.

The item headed 'Women in Production and in the Trade Unions', which was first placed on the agenda at the end of June at the insistence of the con-

84 While it was Lozovsky who tried to achieve this compromise on the trade-union level, in the Comintern it was Trotsky who had intensive discussions with the syndicalists, particularly with his old comrades in arms from Paris around *La Vie ouvrière*. Rosmer, who had come to Moscow, was an example of this. Trotsky endeavoured to influence events as far away as France with his letters to Monatte and his writings on the French workers' movement. His arguments directed at the syndicalists aimed firstly to convince them that their conception of the importance of the 'active minority' was not far removed from the Bolshevik conception of the party, and secondly to show that they were unconditionally needed as revolutionaries to drive the remnants of Social Democracy out of the PCF. (See his letters of 31 July 1920 and 13 July 1921 to Monatte, printed in Leon Trotsky, *Le mouvement communiste en France (1919-1939)*. *Textes choisis et présentés par Pierre Broué*, Paris, 1967, pp. 85-7 and 113-15).

ference of the Communist Women's International,⁸⁵ was introduced by Hertha Sturm⁸⁶ in a report delivered at a session held on 15 July. She gave a thorough analysis of the growing tendency towards the employment of women, of the conditions women were subjected to at work, for example the fact that their wages were lower than men's, and of their lower level of trade-union membership. Women's increasing role in production was to be welcomed, and the attempts to push them out of the production process were to be combated. Instead of this, they should work to achieve a united fighting front of men and women, though they should also support the introduction and extension of special measures for the protection of women, such as maternity leave. She ended her speech with the demand to lighten the burden on housewives by introducing the collective principle for housework. This was clearly aimed at opening the way to for working-class housewives to enter paid employment.

A commission was set up to discuss this report.⁸⁷ The results of its labours were presented by the Swiss delegate Rosa Bloch in the form of a resolution which took over the main ideas in Stasova-Sturm's report. Clara Zetkin followed this with a short speech. The resolution was so uncontroversial that, according to the minutes, the speeches of Bloch and Zetkin are not even followed by a vote.⁸⁸

The organisers of the RILU congress had not originally intended to include a report on the problem of war victims, but on its penultimate day, a report was in fact delivered by Karl Tiedt, a representative of the International League of Victims of War and Labour. He outlined the importance of the problem for the RILU in view of the attempts by Amsterdam to gain influence in this area and the activity of the War Disability section of the International Labour Office. He

85 RGASPI 534/3/2/82 and 86.

86 This was the pseudonym under which the old Bolshevik Elena Stasova (1873–1966) was active in Germany at the beginning of the 1920s. The minutes of the congress always refer to her under the name Hertha Sturm, describing her as a member of the *Zentralverband der Angestellten* [Central Association of Salaried Employees], which was the most important free trade union of office employees in Germany. She had not played a role in the ITUC, nor was she to appear later in the RILU, apart from delivering a similar speech at the second RILU congress. This shows the improvised nature of this agenda item. The report itself is printed in *Biulleten'*, nos. 11–12.

87 The congress bulletin does not contain any minutes of this commission's discussions.

88 *Biulleten'*, no. 14. The resolution is: 'Die Frau in Produktion und in den Gewerkschaften. Resolution zum Bericht der Gen. Sturm', in *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 77–8.

presented a resolution which was referred to the presidium of the congress for final editorial work.⁸⁹

A resolution on the trade-union movement in the colonial countries introduced by Lozovsky on the final day of the congress had also not been part of the original agenda. One can only speculate as to why this resolution was unexpectedly introduced. The impulse perhaps came from the fact that at its third congress the Comintern again looked into these countries and passed detailed resolutions on the subject,⁹⁰ with the result that the matter began to look as if a 'proper' international should take account of it. It is also possible that this was a way of replying to the criticism raised earlier during the discussion over mandates that representatives from colonial countries where there were no genuine workers' movements had been given equal rights at the congress.

This resolution did little more in fact than make the point that a trade-union movement was in the course of emerging in the colonial countries, and that it was the duty of the workers in the imperialist countries to support them in any way possible. This would also help to advance the struggle against the rule of capital in their own country. In this context, the RILU had an important future task. The colonial countries would in fact form an important field of activity for the RILU in later years, and it was able to achieve considerable, though temporary, successes there, which had escaped it in Western Europe. What was completely missing from this resolution, however, was a concrete strategy for the trade-union movement in the colonial countries. What attitude should it take to movements for national liberation, which were often named in conjunction with the direct struggle of the workers against their exploitation?

After Lozovsky had read out the resolution, a delegate from Java, followed by Tom Mann, as the most well-known trade unionist from the leading colonial power, added a few words of encouragement, calling on the delegates to try to understand the importance of this question.⁹¹

89 *Biulleten'*, no. 14, and 'Resolution zum Kriegsofferproblem', *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 78–9. The International League of Victims of War and Labour was a communist-run international socio-political organisation. Karl Tiedt was its founder. He had been a member of the SPD before the war, then joined the USPD and since the Unification Congress at the end of 1920 had been in the KPD.

90 Nor should the Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East in 1920 be forgotten. There were some trade-union discussions in this context at the time (see chapter 3, section 7).

91 *Biulleten'*, no. 15. The resolution is: 'Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung im nahen und fernen Osten und in den Kolonien', *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 79–80. According to the bulletin of the congress, the name of the Indonesian delegate was Nor Jono. This was certainly a pseudonym. The information in Ruth McVey 1965, *The Rise*

The harmonious atmosphere which prevailed at this point was then abruptly interrupted. The syndicalists and the communists began to clash again. The conflict started after the short colonial debate had ended. Lozovsky gave the floor to Rosmer for a 'special declaration' and the latter then presented a 'leader of the IWW and a member of the communist party' who had just arrived after his flight from the USA: George Andreytchine. (After the rejection of his appeal against the sentence, he should have returned to prison with the other IWW leaders, but, like Haywood, he fled to Soviet Russia, with the encouragement of the Comintern, causing the forfeiture of the bail money raised for him). Andreytchine greeted the congress, telling of the great sympathy of the American workers for the Russian Revolution, and attacking the critics of Bolshevism in the IWW. He spoke, he said, in the name of the communist opposition within the IWW, which was fighting not only against any direct betrayal of the working class, but also against any deviation from revolutionary principles. He ended his short address by calling on the RILU to fight hand in hand with the Comintern.⁹²

Andreytchine's attack on his IWW opponents had been directed at 'representatives who are present here'. No doubt he was particularly aiming at Williams, who was one of the most intransigent opponents of the Bolsheviks at this congress. But his appearance at this congress was certainly not planned in advance. His flight from the USA would definitely have taken a week, so it would have been impossible to give a precise time for his arrival. It would be more accurate to say that the Bolsheviks made skilful use of the coincidence of his arrival at that moment to add weight to the general attack on anarchist sympathisers among the delegates which was planned for this session. The advant-

of Indonesian Communism, pp. 440–1, who herself appears to know nothing of his appearance at the RILU congress, suggests that the delegate in question was Raden Darsono, who played an important part in the Indonesian Communist Party in the 1920s and also in the Comintern. It is impossible to reconcile the following reminiscences by Tom Bell with the official minutes of the congress. He says that Tom Mann 'had been asked to make a report on the Eastern question! It was nine o'clock in the morning and his report was due at ten or eleven o'clock. Tom had been awake all night collecting his thoughts and collating his material. I collaborated, to help him to be ready in time. Tom got going in fine style, but with his customary eloquence he spoke longer than the time allotted to him. The result was a decision by the president to limit the other speakers in discussion to five minutes each. The Indian leader and other delegates from colonial countries protested vigorously and refused to speak unless they were given ample time. What threatened to be an incident was smoothed out by a tactful compromise in favour of the colonial delegates' (Bell 1941, p. 239).

92 Andreytchine's speech and the replies to it are printed in *Biulleten'*, no. 15.

age they gained from Andreytchine's appearance lay in the fact that he could speak as the representative of a current within the IWW. They could therefore claim that they were not the only ones who were criticising the Wobblies for their attitude. Without a doubt, however, Andreytchine would not have been able to step onto the platform if the Bolsheviks had objected to this.

There was plenty of reaction to what he said, although, perhaps because of general astonishment at his sudden appearance, a discussion was first held on the resolutions on organisation and tactics, at which the syndicalists had much to say (see the previous section). After the vote on these resolutions, both Cascaden and Williams issued angry protest declarations to the effect that it was slanderous to claim that the IWW had rejected the Russian Revolution. The one person who tried to do that – Sandgren of the *One Big Union Monthly* – had been removed from his position as a result. Williams demanded that Andreytchine strike out his comments on this from the minutes.⁹³ This was followed by a number of other statements by American delegates, including Haywood, who gave their views on Sandgren's behaviour, but feelings seemed to calm down eventually.

It was a similarly unannounced appearance, this time by Bukharin, which actually brought the congress to the brink of dissolution. His intervention was a reaction to the endeavours of numerous syndicalist delegates to obtain from the Bolsheviks the release of the imprisoned Russian anarchists. These efforts had continued throughout the course of the congress and they were still going on (see the next section). The congress had not been officially involved in these matters though. It had been agreed that the negotiations should remain confidential (which meant that Bukharin's speech was doubly provocative). Even so, most of the syndicalist delegates who were not involved in these efforts were aware of the facts. Bukharin, who was not a delegate, presented to the congress an outline of the 'counter-revolutionary behaviour' of the Russian anarchists, in the name of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party.⁹⁴

93 Andreytchine did in fact do this. This can be deduced indirectly from the assertions of Cascaden and Williams about what he had said, but it can also be read in Cascaden's pamphlet (Cascaden, p. 63). According to Cascaden, Andreytchine had the word 'counter-revolutionary' struck out. Emma Goldman, who was present as a spectator at this session, commented with particular bitterness on Andreytchine's behaviour: 'Andreytchine had never been blessed with much backbone ... spineless creature that he was'; he committed 'treachery' (Goldman 1931, vol. 2, p. 916).

94 Bukharin's speech and the controversy that followed it are printed in *Biulleten'*, no. 15. According to *Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaya Khronika* vol. 9, pp. 53 and 55, Bukharin's intervention was the result of a decision by the Politbureau. The Russian representat-

These anarchists were not to be compared with those of Western Europe and the Americas, who represented certain strata of the proletariat. The Russian anarchists, in contrast, rested on non-proletarian forces. The Makhno movement, Kronstadt and an anarchist attack on the Moscow Party Committee in 1919 all proved that the anarchists had taken up arms against the dictatorship of the proletariat and were therefore rightly in prison. The delegates should also understand that he could not divulge all the details in public.

When Lozovsky followed this speech by trying to move onto the next point on the agenda, a storm of fury broke out. Even the official minutes remark that there were 'catcalls and interjections from the French and Spanish delegations'. Cascaden's report is more dramatic: 'When Lozovsky tried to speak the delegates stood on their chairs and sang the "International". For several minutes the hall of the congress was not dissimilar to the New York Stock Exchange. Everyone was shouting, including the onlookers, who came down from their places into the assembly itself'.⁹⁵ Some reports even say that a detachment of soldiers was brought in to protect the speakers' platform from attacks by the delegates.⁹⁶

Sirolle was finally able to calm the atmosphere by making a declaration on behalf of the syndicalist opposition. He vehemently protested against the fact that Bukharin had brought the matter up at the congress. A commission to discuss the issue had long ago been established. Negotiations with Lenin and Lunacharsky had resulted in an agreement granting an amnesty to the anarchist prisoners. If the international counter-revolution could make capital out of their public discussion about this, they were not the ones to blame. He strongly rejected Bukharin's presentation of Russian anarchism, but he

ives in the congress presidium – Lozovsky and Rykov – stated their opposition to the idea. (The above publication incorrectly deduces from this that Bukharin's intervention did not take place). It is clear that both Lozovsky and Rykov were bound by party discipline. The RILU archive unfortunately does not contain any material to show whether the presidium of the congress formally approved Bukharin's intervention, or whether Lozovsky, as chairman of the session, made it possible without informing his colleagues.

95 Cascaden, p. 82.

96 The other accounts of this incident are Goldman 1931, vol. 2, p. 914; Berkman 1989, p. 317; M. Disch, *Von den Weltkongressen in Moskau 1921. Tagebuchblätter*, Hamburg, 1921, pp. 62–4; Xavier Paniagua, 'La visió de Gaston Leval de la Rússia soviètica el 1921', *Recerques*, no. 3, 1973, pp. 199–224, here pp. 222–3; and Foster 1921, pp. 129–30. It is obvious that the minutes present a highly sanitised version of the events. On the other hand, this tumult did not involve the raising of any actual point of order by any delegate.

distanced himself explicitly from Makhno's 'gangs'. The Russian anarchists, who represented a whole spectrum of different positions, had nothing to do with Makhno. They had always defended the Russian Revolution. He concluded by proposing that the representative of the Russian anarchists who was present on this occasion – this was Shapiro according to several reports – be allowed to speak so as to present their real standpoint. But a Polish delegate cleverly avoided this by proposing that the congress take note of the declarations of both Bukharin and Sirolle and pass on to the agreed agenda.

This proposal was accepted. Then Lozovsky read a manifesto of the congress 'to the workers of the world', and Godonnèche read one 'to the Russian people', after which both were unanimously confirmed without any discussion.⁹⁷ Rykov then read out a letter from Lenin – this time the plenum stayed quiet – in which he thanked some of the delegates for asking him to come to the congress. He was unable to come owing to illness, he said. He was aware of the importance of the congress, and he was sure that communism would be victorious in the trade unions.⁹⁸

With this, the congress came to an end. Lozovsky made a short closing speech in which he emphasised the significance of the foundation of the RILU, adding that the next task would be the establishment of the International Propaganda Committees. The horizontal unification of the trade unions would be complemented by their vertical unification, with the building of Red Internationals for each branch of trade. The order in which he uttered his last two sentences was eloquent enough: 'Long live the Red International of Labour Unions! Long live the Communist International!'⁹⁹

It had thus been possible to bring the congress to a harmonious conclusion after all. How the hard core of the syndicalists would react remained an open question. But the end result was that an independent Red International of Labour Unions had now been founded as 'the result of a compromise between

97 *Biulleten'*, no. 15, and *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, pp. 12–16 and 87–8.

98 *Biulleten'*, no. 15. G.M. Adibekov has made an attempt to demonstrate that Lenin failed to appear at the congress not because he was ill, since he had been able to attend other meetings despite his (genuine) illness, but because he either did not think it was important to found the RILU or even opposed its foundation, because he did not want people to leave the reformist trade unions (Adibekov 1991, pp. 98–101). This theory has an artificial ring to it. It was not just that the amount of time at Lenin's disposal was doubtless restricted. It also appears from the text of his message of greetings to the congress that he regarded the establishment of the RILU as an important step on the road to the conquest of the trade unions.

99 *Biulleten'*, no. 15.

communists and syndicalists'.¹⁰⁰ The establishment of the RILU was the concluding act in a series of developments set in motion by the formation of the ITUC. It was not without contradictions, however. To found a new international and at the same time to insist on continued membership in mass trade unions led by Social Democrats had a contradictory element, which Victor Serge called to mind over twenty years later when he described the congress: 'It followed logically that in splitting the socialist movement one should also split the trade union movement'.¹⁰¹ But this was a contradiction that only emerged in its full clarity in retrospect. At the point in time when the congress was held, the Bolsheviks had quite a different expectation of the way events would develop

100 This is how Lozovsky put it in a letter of January 1922 to Monatte, printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 336–43, here p. 342. He continued: 'We are concentrating the whole of our energy and attention on consolidating this union'. Many similar statements were made at the time. Shortly afterwards, at the first enlarged plenum of the ECCI, Lozovsky said this: 'The RILU is also a combination of non-communist elements, such as the *syndicalists*, with the *opposition* within the *Amsterdam trade unions*, which is not yet communist and is not yet willing to fight for communist objectives with communist means' (*Der Kampf der Kommunisten in den Gewerkschaften* 1922, p. 24). Bukharin had already argued on similar lines at an ECCI meeting shortly after the RILU congress, on 27 July 1921: 'If the RILU had just contained the representatives of our cells in the trade unions, it would actually not have been a Red International. The purpose of the work being done here is to gather together forces which are not entirely communist but are inclining towards communism' (*Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive und des Präsidiums des E. K. der Kommunistischen Internationale vom 13. Juli 1921 bis 1. Februar 1922*, Petrograd, 1922, p. 58).

101 Serge 1951, p. 166 [p. 146 of the English translation of Serge's memoirs, published in 1963, omits this passage]. Later on, Rosmer made the following commentary on Serge's statement: 'In these few lines there are a series of startling errors that one is surprised to find in something written by Victor Serge. What he claims in no way "logically" followed. On the contrary, logic requires a distinction between a political party which brings together people who are in agreement on a basic programme, and a union which is open to all wage-earners' (Rosmer 1971, p. 189). He went on to refer to the attitude of Social Democracy in 1914, which made a split unavoidable. He contrasted this with Lenin's call in *Left-Wing Communism* for fractional work in the trade unions. But it seems that, on the contrary, Rosmer misunderstood Serge's argument. Like Tanner at the Second Comintern Congress (see chapter 3, section 2), he considered that the formation of a trade-union international created a certain dynamic leading in the direction of a split. This was entirely independent of – and it could even be in contradiction to – the attitude taken towards national trade-union organisations. The RILU itself recognised this a few months afterwards when it made an alteration in its tactics and tried as hard as possible to remove the *organisational* aspect from the question of 'Moscow or Amsterdam'.

in the future. As Zinoviev argued at the Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924, when it was necessary to justify the unity offensive against the IFTU: 'The RILU was founded at a time when it seemed that we might be able to break through the enemy front in a head-on attack, and rapidly conquer the trade unions'.¹⁰² The RILU would find out within a few months that this was not the case.

At the RILU congress, Lozovsky turned out to be, without question, the leading personality in the new trade-union international.¹⁰³ What most of the delegates did not know was that Lozovsky's position was a result of the enforced absence of Tomsy. Thanks to his knowledge of foreign languages and his international experience, Lozovsky had been able to fulfil the role of an international Bolshevik trade-union leader so well that the Bolshevik leadership soon found it impossible in practice to replace him. No doubt the RILU would not have differed in any fundamental way if Tomsy had been able to take over the prominent position originally planned for him. One can only speculate as to what other effects his presence might have had, perhaps in creating a different atmosphere more favourable to co-operation between syndicalists and communists.

5 The Syndicalist Opposition and the Question of the Anarchist Prisoners

The syndicalist delegates had repeatedly failed to make any headway at the RILU congress. When they met in the evenings after the plenary sessions they tried to arrive at a common position: 'The oppositional workers' delegates held numerous meetings – almost always during the night and almost always in the hotel rooms of a delegate, where the cramped conditions made it necessary for some people to sit on the bed or the floor, while others remained standing'.¹⁰⁴ This description by Cascaden is supplemented by Williams, who underlines the difficulty in reaching agreement: 'These conferences had no result, for several reasons. Language difficulties made it almost impossible for us to understand

102 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1924, vol. 2, p. 912.

103 Some participants commented on this with understandable bitterness: 'Lozovsky was the source of all decisions, and one could be certain that what he said would be accepted as a rule, until a situation arose which in his opinion required a change' (Williams, p. 16). 'Lozovsky constantly endeavoured to control the direction of the meetings' (Cascaden, p. 52).

104 Cascaden, p. 67.

each other. It was difficult to get hold of interpreters, and the ones who were available could not always work. Very often we found that we were without any help in this direction'.¹⁰⁵

Before the congress began, and in its earliest sessions, the opposition's deliberations were clearly informal. But on 14 July, once it had become apparent that the syndicalists had been defeated, the German 'unionists' sent a letter proposing that the different groups associate together more closely. This letter fell into the hands of Lozovsky, however.¹⁰⁶

It was not only linguistic difficulties that prevented the oppositional groups at the RILU congress from reaching an agreement. As we have already shown, their angles of approach were entirely different. The representatives of influential syndicalist organisations or currents in France and Spain were confronted with problems which differed from those facing the delegates of the 'independent revolutionary unions' from Central and Northern Europe and the English-speaking countries. The latter had to contend with mass trade unions of a reformist type. This difference was clearly evident from the way their statements diverged during the interval between the discussion of the relations between the RILU and the Comintern, and the discussion of tactics and organisation. Another point of difference was a tactical question: should they leave the RILU immediately, or should they get ready to work on a long-term basis within the organisation?¹⁰⁷ It appears that the latter course was supported above all by the representatives of France and Spain, who were the really influential syndicalists.

According to Williams, there were only two formal meetings of the oppositional groups before the congress came to an end. There were more meetings afterwards, but they were vitiated by the fact that some delegates were already about to leave the country.¹⁰⁸ The sole result of all these meetings was a series of manifestos.

A 'Manifesto to the Revolutionary Syndicalists of the World', which was, Williams says, the first one issued, made the point that they had been forced into a minority by the unrepresentative way in which delegates were allotted to each organisation. As a result, the RILU had come under the influence of a political

105 Williams 1921, p. 28.

106 It is printed in *Biulleten'*, nos. 11–12, and in 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU' 1921. The report of the NAS delegation also refers to the initiative taken by the independent German unionists. (*Het congres der Roode Vak-Internationale te Moskou 1921. Rapport N.A.S.-Delegatie*, Amsterdam, 1921, p. 6).

107 This point of disagreement is stressed particularly by Williams (1921, pp. 28–30).

108 Williams 1921, pp. 27–8.

organisation, the Comintern. But the syndicalist goal was to establish the independence of the economic organisation of the proletariat on the basis of the principles of revolutionary syndicalism. The USI, whose delegates had arrived in Moscow in the meantime, was given the task of co-ordinating relations between all the syndicalist organisations.¹⁰⁹ Another manifesto, with a different objective, proposed the establishment of a bureau in Paris. It even spoke of a 'world association' of revolutionary syndicalists.¹¹⁰ The details of these discussions are obscure, owing to the imprecision of the reports, and in part also the way they contradict each other. It is possible that because of difficulties in communication the participants were often not clear themselves about what they were signing.¹¹¹ For example, the AAU delegation published details on the proposed rules for organising the opposition's working group within the RILU, but there are no traces of this document anywhere else.¹¹² All this reflected the greatly heterogeneous character of the syndicalist currents at the congress.¹¹³

109 This manifesto is printed in Williams 1921, pp. 35–8 and *Travaux du camarade Michel Relenque*, pp. 6–10.

110 Williams 1921, pp. 32–4, and extracts in Cascaden, pp. 71–2.

111 For example, in the IWW Collection at Wayne State University (Box 22, folders 16 and 17), there is an English translation of a protest by Arthur Bartels, who was the delegate of the Gelsenkirchen Union at the RILU founding congress, to the 14th IWW Convention (held in November 1922). He protests that the two manifestos of the opposition at the RILU congress contained in Williams's report (in other words, his pamphlet *The First Congress*) were not signed by him, as Williams maintained. He was also 'never ... involved in producing them'. Williams replied in a letter to the 'Complaints Committee' of the IWW Convention that when writing his report he unfortunately only possessed copies of the manifestos and not the originals. He could only say that 'Bartel [sic! – R.T.] was in the same room as I was as well as the others whose names I gave as signatories and who signed the manifesto in my presence ... Nevertheless, it can be added here that this *démenti* comes over a year since the pamphlet was printed, and many copies were sent to Germany. It was also much discussed in the communist press. It is interesting that Bartel has waited a whole year to deny something which now seems to be so important'. One can only speculate on the background to this incident. Was it an attempt to discredit Williams and exert some influence on the IWW Convention? But could the Comintern have had such an unrealistic, indeed a stupid, view of the mood within the IWW? Bartels's attitude in the summer of 1921 was after all not a secret and it was sufficiently documented both in the minutes of the RILU congress and in the publications of the Gelsenkirchen Union.

112 Printed in 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU', 1921.

113 See the following statement by the NAS delegation: 'Our general impression of the various opposition conferences we attended was from the outset not particularly favourable. Not much homogeneity was to be perceived among the representatives of the oppositional organisations from the different trade unions' (*Het congres* 1921, p. 7).

In Williams's view, these manifestos still showed 'a very patient attitude in a situation which demanded drastic action'.¹¹⁴ Some months later, he would belong to a group of people who took the first step towards setting up an independent syndicalist international by holding discussions in Germany (see chapter 5, section 2). Other delegates, however, took a different view. For them the manifestos of the opposition went too far in their criticism of the Comintern. As a result, the intended bureau in Paris did not in fact get off the ground.¹¹⁵ Moreover, on 29 July, the Spanish, Italian and Dutch delegations at the congress sent a letter addressed to the 'Bureau of the Left Opposition in the RILU' in which they stated that in their opinion the publication of the opposition's 'Manifesto to Revolutionary Syndicalists' could have serious consequences for revolutionary unity. They declared that they were opposed to building up a closely-knit group of syndicalists as an opposition within the RILU.¹¹⁶

Instead of supporting the manifesto, the syndicalists who wanted to co-operate with the communists in the RILU now made a public declaration of their position. The RILU was now a reality, it was stated in this document, dated 2 August and signed by Díaz Ramírez, Sirolle, Postuma (NAS Federation of Transport Workers), Bouwman (NAS), Nin, Andreytchine, Tom Mann, and the USI delegates Mari and Vecchi. From now on, it would form the centre of the revolutionary trade-union movement. The syndicalists would take part in it, although it did not entirely conform to their conceptions and they had had to make some concessions. The unification of all syndicalists in the RILU would ensure that its autonomy was strengthened. It would be criminal to set up a second revolutionary trade-union international now. All syndicalists were urged to take part in the RILU.¹¹⁷

This meant that the syndicalist delegates were now definitely divided into two factions, a majority and a minority. The motives that had induced a large number of syndicalists to take part in the RILU were openly stated by the majority group. It was, they said, their firm intention to stand beside the Russian Revolution, which was identified with the Bolsheviks. Their adherence was made possible by the fact that the Bolsheviks were prepared to establish an independent trade-union international. It was true that they placed a high value on its close co-operation with the Comintern. But they had made some

114 Williams 1921, p. 35.

115 Cascaden, p. 73.

116 The latter is printed in *Het congres* 1921, p. 22.

117 'An die revolutionären Syndikalisten aller Länder', *Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, 30 August 1921, pp. 37–8. Also printed in *Het congres* 1921, pp. 22–3.

concessions in formulating their position, in dealing with the organisation's statutes, for example. The guarantee of independence was, as the NAS delegation said in its report, 'the concession which was made to the revolutionary trade union movement' in return.¹¹⁸ Or, as Rosmer formulated it in a letter he sent to Monatte, which contained a retrospective look at the work of the congress for the benefit of the French syndicalists, 'after a lot of work we succeeded in constructing an international acceptable to everyone – even to you'.¹¹⁹

For the intransigent syndicalists, this was not enough. They did not even want the two internationals to exist side by side in a condition of formal equality. Any connection between them would constitute a subordination of the economic international to the political one. Now that the congress had ended, however, it would be necessary to wait in order to see how the individual syndicalist organisations reacted to the choice that faced them.

The independence of the organisation was not the only issue that worried the syndicalist delegates at the RILU congress. They were equally moved by the fate of the Russian anarchists, who had been subjected to harsher measures of repression in the spring of 1921 in the context of the Kronstadt rising and the introduction of the NEP, as we noted earlier. Numerous fresh arrests swelled the number of anarchist inmates of the Moscow prisons. These were entirely arbitrary measures, a form of 'preventive repression', because they were not put on trial, not least because there was no proof of their alleged 'counter-revolutionary crimes'.

The syndicalists who arrived in Moscow in 1921 received a great deal of information about this. The two Russian-American anarchists Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman played an important role here. Goldman described their involvement vividly in her memoirs: 'The French, Italian, Spanish, German and Scandinavian Anarcho-Syndicalists lost no time in seeking us out. In fact they made our place their headquarters. They spent with us every free hour they had, eager to know our impressions and views. They had heard of the alleged persecution of the Left-wing elements by the Communists, but they had taken it as a capitalist fabrication ... They would never have believed such a state of affairs possible in Soviet Russia, they declared, and they would immediately demand an accounting'.¹²⁰

118 *Het congres* 1921, p. 24. Another passage states that the only thing uniting the opposition had been its wish to prevent the RILU from being placed under the direction of the Comintern. The NAS delegates came to the following conclusion: 'This intention was then ... crowned with success'.

119 *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, p. 302.

120 Goldman 1931, vol. 2, pp. 906–7 and 908.

The day before the RILU congress met, the syndicalists had a meeting with Goldman and Berkman, at which they received the information that the anarchists in the Taganka prison in Moscow had gone on hunger strike. The idea immediately occurred to them that they could use the opening session of the RILU congress for a spectacular intervention on the subject. But they eventually decided to visit Lozovsky and other Russian trade-union leaders, who strongly advised them not to proceed with the plan. They should attempt to solve this problem, said Lozovsky, through negotiations with the Bolshevik leadership. They should set up a committee to do this.¹²¹

Goldman and Berkman were not the only people who organised links between the syndicalist delegates, those Russian anarchists who were still at large and the relatives of the ones in prison, while providing everyone with detailed information.¹²² Shapiro also seems to have been particularly important in this respect.¹²³ Victor Serge played a similar role. Despite being a member of the communist party, he was deeply affected by these developments because of his anarchist past. He had few illusions. What distinguished him from Goldman and Berkman was his hope that he could still exert some influence. Although Goldman and Berkman had co-operated with the Bolsheviks since their arrival in Russia in 1920, they had never been members of the party and they had in fact now broken with them over the Kronstadt affair.

Serge was also an important source of information, as is shown by the reports of several delegates. Admittedly, he rapidly became the target of embittered attacks by the more intransigent syndicalist delegates because of his attempts to mediate and to influence Bolshevik policies. For them his intermediate position was nothing but a loathsome 'double game'. In secret he provided information about the Cheka's terror, while in public he praised the Bolsheviks.¹²⁴

121 Goldman 1931, vol. 2, p. 908. Berkman gives a less detailed account (Berkman, pp. 310–13). They both describe a 'private' meeting in their Moscow flat. Maurín (1966, p. 262) mentions an official meeting of the syndicalist delegations, at which he represented the CNT. The proposal was made to withdraw from the congress on account of the repression against the anarchists. He spoke against this, and the proposal was accordingly rejected.

122 Leval from the CNT delegation even succeeded in getting himself smuggled into prison during a visit by the prisoners' wives. He was able to have a long conversation with Voline, one of the spokesmen of the Russian anarchists, who was well-known as having worked with Makhno. (See the extracts from Leval's memoirs in Paniagua 1974, pp. 217–18).

123 It is strange that Goldman does not mention Shapiro in her very full memoirs. Most of the foreign syndicalists mention him in their reports. Maurín, for instance, writes that all the threads of this web of connections seemed to be in his hands (Maurín 1966, p. 262).

124 For example, Albert Lémoiné, 'J'apporte ma part de lumière', *Libertaire*, 17–24 February 1922; Gaston Leval, 'Victor Serge contre Kilbatchiche. Kilbatchiche contre Victor Serge',

When a number of syndicalists and anarchists travelled to Russia in the summer of 1920 to attend the Second Comintern Congress, Serge made intensive efforts to persuade them to engage in joint revolutionary work with the Bolsheviks. He published his arguments in a pamphlet, which concluded by saying that the anarchists were needed to combat the conservative and anti-libertarian tendencies which inevitably came to the surface in a revolution.¹²⁵ Even so, he had no illusions about the nature of Russian anarchism. The haunts of the anarchists, he wrote, were 'crawling with malcontents, uncontrollables, semi-lunatics, and a few ill-disguised genuine counter-revolutionaries'.¹²⁶ It was part of the tragedy of Russian anarchism that they were unable to cope with this situation. A proposal by Kamenev that they should control and purge their own ranks in exchange for the complete legalisation of their movement was rejected – according to Serge – with the argument that they did not want to form a party.¹²⁷

The uncontrollable aspects of Russian anarchism, and in particular the expropriations carried out after the revolution, had already begun to repel some of their original sympathisers abroad.¹²⁸ Doubts about the anarchists

Libertaire, 3–10 March 1922; Gaston Leval, 'Réplique à Victor Serge', *Libertaire*, 28 April–5 May 1922. Leval also returned to the question in his memoirs. See also Paniagua 1974, pp. 211–15. Maurín, in contrast, characterises Serge as honest and upright (Maurín 1966, p. 263). The Russian anarchist German Sandomirsky, who was a high-level official in the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, occupied an intermediate position which was similar to Serge's. He too was an important focus for foreign syndicalists in the summer of 1921, and like Serge he did not mince his words about the repressive measures in Russia. To be sure, he also advocated co-operation with the Bolsheviks, and he too was repeatedly the target of vehement hostility as a result. Cf. Gaston Legal, 'Lettre ouverte à Sandomirski', *Libertaire*, 13–20 October 1922; 'Pour Sandomirsky, chef de la Section balkanique au Commissariat des Affaires Etrangères de Russie', *Libertaire*, 1–8 December 1922; 'Lettre ouverte à G. Sandomirski qui se dit encore Anarchiste Russe', *Libertaire*, 24 February 1924; 'Les aveux de Sandomirsky et son embarras', 8 May 1924.

125 Victor Serge, *Les anarchistes et l'expérience de la révolution russe*, Paris, 1921, p. 46. The only Bolshevik leader to put forward such ideas was Preobrazhenskyy. See the quotation from his pamphlet *Anarkhizm i kommunizm*, first published in 1918 and then reissued in 1921, which is given by Alexandre Skirda in the preface to his anthology *Les anarchistes dans la révolution russe*, Paris, 1973, pp. 15–16.

126 Serge 1963, p. 119.

127 Ibid.

128 Some years later, Arlandis recalled a conversation he had had outside the congress with the American communist Robert Minor. Minor, who was still an anarchist at that time, had been a witness of the Russian Revolution in the months after October 1917. He related

were an important weapon in the hands of the Bolsheviks in their fight against them.¹²⁹ The Russian anarchists themselves admitted after they had been exiled that such activities had indeed taken place under the flag of anarchism, when they prefaced their collection of documents on the persecution of anarchism in Russia with the remark that this material 'does not relate to persons who have been prosecuted for expropriations and similar acts'. Bolshevik repressive measures, particularly in the spring of 1921, were aimed at entirely different groups, and as they rightly stated in the previous sentence, they constituted 'persecution by the Soviet government of the idea of anarchism'.¹³⁰

The anarchists were a very insignificant threat to Bolshevik rule, Serge pointed out. 'Would it have endangered the Soviet régime if they had been granted freedom of thought and expression? It would be lunatic to think so. It was merely that the majority of Bolsheviks, true to the Marxist tradition, regarded them as "petty-bourgeois utopians" whose existence was incompatible with the extension of "scientific socialism". Inside the brains of the Chekists and of certain bureaucrats who had fallen prey to the psychoses of authority, these "petty-bourgeois" types were fast growing into a rabble of objective counter-revolutionaries who had to be put down once for all'.¹³¹ Here Serge perhaps underestimates the potential danger which might proceed from the anarch-

to Arlandis how his support had been misused in March 1918 to justify expropriations (Hilario Arlandis, 'La pretendida persecución contra los anarquistas rusos', *La Batalla*, no. 54, 16 May 1924).

129 It should also be mentioned that the picture presented by the Russian anarchists in the summer of 1921 to their foreign interlocutors was much more moderate than that of the Makhno movement, for example, and that even Makhno's image became increasingly idealised abroad as time went on. When Arlandis had a conversation with Voline in 1921, the latter presented a rather critical picture of Makhno, not hiding various negative features of his character. A few years later, Arlandis reproduced these remarks in an article, which provoked a violent protest by Voline. (See Hilario Arlandis, 'Voline, exconsejero político de Majno, defiende al aventurero', *La Batalla*, no. 60, 27 June 1924. This was his rejoinder to an article by Voline in *Le Libertaire* for 7 June 1924 entitled 'Arlandis, le valet au service de Moscou', in which the latter had in turn replied to an article by Arlandis about Makhno). Sirolle too, who unlike Arlandis was one of the intransigent delegates at the RILU congress, had acquired a negative picture of the Makhno movement, but he considered that his movement had nothing to do with the Russian anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists unjustifiably arrested by the Bolsheviks, as he pointed out in his answer to Bukharin at the end of the RILU congress (see section 4 of this chapter).

130 *Die Verfolgung des Anarchismus in Sowjetrussland*, Berlin, 1923, p. 35.

131 Serge 1963, pp. 120–1.

ists simply from the fact that in Bolshevik eyes they were a reminder of the unfulfilled promise of the revolution. Against the background of the economic collapse which ravaged the country in 1921, memories of this kind did represent a danger to Bolshevik rule.

The direct and indirect contacts we have outlined above ensured that the thirteen anarchists held in the Taganka prison in Moscow would receive publicity if they went on a hunger strike. They therefore decided to do this at the beginning of July, at the start of the RILU congress, in order to secure their liberation.¹³² The syndicalists responded by setting up a committee, after they had abandoned the idea of engaging in a spectacular action at the congress itself.¹³³ The first thing the committee did was to have a meeting with the head of the Cheka, Dzierżyński, at which they handed him a list of names. His only response was that they had been misled. There were many proven criminals on the list. He roundly refused to investigate the arrests.¹³⁴

Someone then had the idea of approaching Lenin directly. Michel Kneller wrote to him, and he replied on 10 July proposing a meeting the next day.¹³⁵ The meeting lasted for several hours. The syndicalists were again able to present a large number of facts to prove that the anarchists had been imprisoned solely for political reasons. Lenin, though his manner was conciliatory and he listened carefully to all their declarations, remained unyielding on the actual issue. He did, however, promise to bring the matter to the attention of the politbureau.¹³⁶

132 One of the participants later provided a detailed account of the hunger strike and the subsequent release of the anarchists. See Maximoff 1940, pp. 475–99.

133 Leval later gave the names of the eight members of this committee. These were, apart from himself, Tom Mann, Arlandis, Cascaden, Sirolle, Gaudeaux, the Mexican Díaz Ramírez and a representative of the independent German ‘unionists’ whose name he could not recall. The composition of the group which actually met the Bolshevik representatives seems to have varied, however. (Gaston Leval, ‘A propos de la répression bolcheviste’, *Le Libertaire*, 24 February–3 March 1922).

134 According to Maurin, who represented the CNT at the meeting, this delegation had five members; he did not, however, name anyone else who went with him. Manuil'sky acted as interpreter (Maurin 1966, p. 262). Leval, on the other hand, wrote that Maurin had not been nominated to the committee because his politics were distrusted (Paniagua, ‘La visió’, p. 217). This seems improbable, since he also belonged to the next group of delegates, which had a meeting with Lenin.

135 Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. *Biograficheskaiia Khronika*, vol. 10, 1980, pp. 676–7.

136 There are reports on this meeting, at which Lenin also asked the delegates about the situation in their home countries, in Paniagua 1974, pp. 220–2 and Manuel Díaz Ramírez, ‘Anarchisten und Antiparlamentarismus’, in *Lenin und die Internationale. Erinnerungen von Zeitgenossen*, Berlin-GDR, 1983, pp. 205–11. Cascaden gave the meeting only a brief

Its answer, given on 12 July, and signed by Trotsky, was clear. The hunger strikers had taken part in the fight against communism. For its own protection, the politbureau could not give way, the more so because communists who had fallen into the anarchists' hands had not even had the chance of defending themselves in the way these prisoners had done. They could not be released because they would again engage in anti-communist activity. But the politbureau did make a concrete proposal: it was ready to allow the anarchists to emigrate. Trotsky called on the syndicalists to persuade the prisoners to break off their hunger strike.¹³⁷

The final act of the negotiation took place on 13 July. This time the Bolshevik side was represented by Lunacharsky and the Cheka functionary Unszlicht, and the syndicalists by Arlandis, Leval, Sirolle and Kneller, who were also joined by Shapiro and Berkman. The participants agreed to make an appeal to the hunger strikers to accept the solution of emigration, and they laid down the way this would happen. Berkman alone refused to sign, since he was opposed to deportation on principle.¹³⁸

The issue had not yet been laid to rest completely, however. It surfaced again when after the congress Trotsky visited the French delegation, with which some of the Spaniards were also staying. Several delegates approached him about the anarchists, and Trotsky exploded in irritation. He was the People's Commissar, he said. His word must suffice.¹³⁹

One reason why the anarchist issue remained prominent was that a propaganda offensive was now launched from the Bolshevik side. Bukharin's intervention on the last day of the congress was part of this, although in this case it

mention (pp. 73–5), and he added that he did not want to discuss the content of the conversations as the matter was complicated and Russia was in a difficult situation. See also *Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaya Khronika*, vol. 10, 1980, p. 677.

137 This letter is printed in: International Committee for Political Prisoners (ed.), *Letters from Russian Prisons*, New York, 1925, pp. 255–7. It can also be found in Ia. Iakovlev, *Les 'Anarchistes-Syndicalistes' russes devant le tribunal du prolétariat mondial*, Moscow, 1921, pp. 23–4, but this version characteristically refrains from giving Trotsky's name and excludes the vital passage containing the offer of emigration. (The pamphlet also contains a letter to the French delegation giving the Bolshevik argument against release in more detail. It is undated and also lacks a signature, but it could also have been written by Trotsky).

138 The text of the agreement is printed in Berkman 1989, pp. 315–17 and Goldman 1931, vol. 2, pp. 912–13.

139 This incident is portrayed in slightly different versions in the following: Serge 1963, p. 142; Paniagua, 'La visió', p. 223; and 'Streiflichter aus Moskau', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 32, 1921.

achieved an opposite effect to the one intended (see the previous section).¹⁴⁰ Approximately at the same time (the preface is dated 14 July), a pamphlet appeared, written by a leading Bolshevik functionary, Iakov Iakovlev, entitled 'The Anarchists Before the Court of the World Proletariat', in which the official view of their role in the Russian Revolution was given. It was also published in French, because it was aimed at an audience of foreign syndicalists.¹⁴¹ But the opinions that the syndicalists had already formed could no longer be shaken. One can detect traces of the official view in the attitudes adopted by those who, like the Spaniards, had decided to co-operate with the Bolsheviks,¹⁴² but the reaction of the intransigent syndicalists was the opposite.¹⁴³ In any case, the pamphlet by Iakovlev indicated the line that would be followed in the future by the whole propaganda apparatus of the Comintern and the RILU.

The anarchist prisoners ended their hunger strike after the agreement. But their release was repeatedly postponed. Evidently the Cheka felt that it had a free hand after the departure of almost all the congress delegates. The prisoners were compelled to engage in wearisome negotiations with a state that was clearly unwilling to release them. They were finally freed in September, but they were not able to leave Russia until the end of the year. They finally managed

140 Up to that point, the repression, and the dissidence within the Bolshevik Party in the shape of the Workers' Opposition, which was indeed condemned by the party congress in March 1921 as a 'syndicalist deviation', had only been alluded to in passing at the congress in some of the speeches, as for example by Albert Lemoine, Tom Barker, Artem-Sergeev and in Rosmer's concluding remarks in the debate on the relations between the RILU and the Comintern (*Biulleten'*, nos. 6 and 7). The central demand which actually characterised syndicalist identity, namely the demand for the trade unions to have a leading role in the revolution, and above all to take over the direction of the whole economy, was not even mentioned by the syndicalist speakers. They were more interested in the two questions of the organisational independence of the RILU and the continuing existence of independent trade unions. Only Murphy – an 'industrialist' who had in the meantime joined the communist party of his country – had brought these questions into the deliberations of the relevant commission, in the form of a motion to alter the paragraph of the statutes which determined the aims of the RILU. This motion had immediately met with support from the syndicalist delegates, but it was eventually rejected and played no further role in the plenary discussions. (See section 3 of this chapter).

141 Ia. Iakovlev 1921.

142 The articles written by Arlandis in summer 1924, quoted earlier, are an example.

143 Leval described Iakovlev's work as 'an infamous pamphlet written on the orders of Trotsky'. Sandomirsky, he said, had pulled it to pieces in his presence, line by line, and this had made a powerful impression on him (Gaston Leval, 'Lettre ouverte à Sandomirsky', *Le Libertaire*, 13–20 October 1922).

to get permission to go to Berlin, thanks to the mediation of the FAUD. Goldman, Berkman and Shapiro arrived soon afterwards. They had also decided to leave the country, a decision prompted by the imminence of an international anarchist congress scheduled for December 1921. (They arrived too late to attend this congress, as they were arrested when passing through Sweden and held in prison there for some time). With their arrival, a community of exiled Russian anarchists took shape temporarily in Berlin, though almost all of them soon moved on, the majority to France.¹⁴⁴

Lozovsky seems not to have been involved in this controversy over the hunger strikers. He was, to be sure, the target of many attacks on account of his dominating role at the congress. He was accused of having manipulated it.¹⁴⁵ But in the matter of the hunger strike and the repression directed against the anarchists, he kept in the background, so that it cannot be said – at least at present – whether he had any share in the mediation attempts that went on behind the scenes. As far as his personal attitude was concerned, all we have are contradictory statements from two witnesses: Jacques Mesnil and Victor Godonnèche. Mesnil had visited Moscow in the summer of 1921, and at the end of 1934, in an article in the journal *La Révolution prolétarienne*, he referred to Lozovsky's attitude at that time. The occasion for this intervention was the latter's attempt to justify Stalinist repression against Victor Serge. Mesnil said that he had seen how Lozovsky 'profited' from the revolution in a material sense, for example by acquiring a showy motor-car, and how Lozovsky tried to muzzle the critics by organising Bukharin's appearance at the congress. Godonnèche protested strongly against this version. He had no reason, he said, to defend Lozovsky's subsequent actions. But on that occasion he had allowed Sirolle to speak after Bukharin, when the congress voted in favour of this. The car was an ordinary service vehicle, which had been at the disposal of other people as well, including Godonnèche himself. He also revealed that Lozovsky had provided accommodation for Voline's family, out of personal respect for the latter. Voline later confirmed this.¹⁴⁶ But this undoubtedly honourable gesture was certainly not an expression of political sympathy.

144 Maximoff 1940, pp. 486–99. Goldman 1931, vol. 2, pp. 922–40; and Dittmar Dahlmann, 'Russische Anarchisten im deutschen Exil 1919–1925', in *Russische Emigranten in Deutschland 1918 bis 1941. Leben im europäischen Bürgerkrieg*, edited by Karl Schlögel, 1995, pp. 251–9.

145 For example, by Cascaden (p. 16) and by Williams (1921, p. 52).

146 Jacques Mesnil, 'Les menteurs officiels contre Victor Serge', *La Révolution prolétarienne*, no. 184, 10 October 1934; Victor Godonnèche, 'A propos de l'affaire Serge', *La Révolution prolétarienne*, no. 187, 25 November 1934. (*La Révolution prolétarienne* was a revolutionary

The fate of the Russian anarchists would also resurface as an issue, if without the same degree of virulence, during the next two congresses of the RILU.¹⁴⁷ It had without a doubt deepened the chasm between a considerable section of the syndicalists of Western Europe and the communists. The anarchist attitude of distrust for politics was thereby confirmed in the eyes of many syndicalists. The assurances of the communists that they wanted all revolutionaries to work together were now greeted with even more scepticism. This scepticism was also transferred to the formal concessions made to the syndicalists in the resolutions issued by the RILU congress. The syndicalists' inclination to set up a syndicalist international of their own in opposition to the RILU was inevitably strengthened as a result.

6 Excursus: The Trade-Union Discussion at the Third Comintern Congress

In its letter of invitation to the Third Comintern Congress, the ECCI stressed the 'leading role of the Communist International'.¹⁴⁸ As if to demonstrate this

syndicalist journal founded by Monatte and Rosmer after their expulsion from the PCF at the end of 1924). Lozovsky's assistance to Voline's family was not an isolated case for him at this time. At the beginning of 1921, the Menshevik leader of the Moscow Union of Chemical Workers was arrested, and it was as a result of an intervention by Lozovsky that he was freed, in the spring of that year (Jonathan Aves 1996, *Workers Against Lenin: Labour Protest and the Bolshevik Dictatorship*, p. 177).

147 Not least because of constant campaigns by the anarchists, who continuously referred to the matter in their periodicals, published pamphlets and books on the subject, and endeavoured to organise financial support for them. There is of course an element of irony (and indeed tragedy) in the fact that Emma Goldman was finally forced to make the following comment in a letter written after a conference held in December 1937 by the anarcho-syndicalist IWMA (founded at the end of 1922) dealing with the attitude of the CNT since the start of the civil war in Spain (among other things its decision to enter the government): 'Yes, my dear, we have come to a point I never expected to arrive: to have two opinions. One for the outside world and one for intimate comrades and friends. How I upbraided Bob Minor [in the summer of 1921 – R.T.] when he refused to divulge to the public the horrors of the Soviet regime he disclosed to Sasha and me. How naïve and childish we were to believe that a revolution brought about by anarchists will not impose measures wide of the mark of our ideas' (David Porter (ed.) 1983, *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, p. 307).

148 *Protokoll des III. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, 22. Juni bis 12. Juli 1921*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 4–11, here p. 7.

to everyone, the Third Congress, which met from 22 June until 12 July 1921, took important decisions which prejudiced the deliberations of the RILU congress. It dealt with the trade-union item on its agenda on 3 July some hours before the RILU congress actually began. The sittings of the two congresses were always scheduled for different times of day, so that people who had been delegated to attend both were always able to take part in both.¹⁴⁹ This time too, a number of syndicalist organisations were invited to attend the Comintern congress, namely the CNT, the CSR, the USI, the IWW, the FORA and the NAS. The CGL was also invited.¹⁵⁰

The trade-union discussion at the Third Congress was opened by reports from Zinoviev and Heckert.¹⁵¹ While Zinoviev painted an optimistic picture of the struggle against the 'Amsterdam yellow International' and spoke of the 18 million trade unionists who supported the ITUC, referring in justification to the information provided by Lozovsky,¹⁵² his main concern was to mount an attack on syndicalism and on the demand for trade-union 'neutrality'. Even so, he now came out in favour of the independence of the Red International of Labour Unions, provided that it had a close connection with the Comintern. To unify the two internationals was a task for the future. Heckert, in contrast, dealt with a whole series of questions concerning trade-union organisation and tactics, such as bringing the craft unions together to form centralised industry-wide trade unions, wage struggles, unemployment, factory occupations, and so on.

149 On the trade-union discussion at the Third Comintern Congress, see in detail Resis 1964, pp. 117–32, and Annette Neumann, 'Die Bedeutung des III. Kongresses der KI 1921 für die Aneignung marxistisch-leninistischer Positionen in der Gewerkschaftspolitik', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 5, 1986, pp. 579–91. Trade-union issues naturally resurfaced repeatedly at other points of the congress agenda, particularly in the discussion on Comintern tactics. But the content of these discussions did not differ from that of the discussions on the trade-union item.

150 *Protokoll des III. Kongresses 1921*, pp. 12–13. It can be shown that fewer syndicalist delegates were actually present at the congress than those listed as delegates in the minutes. There were nine syndicalists from France, 11 from the 'syndicalist minority' in France (what this distinction meant is unfortunately not indicated in the minutes), and five CNT members from Spain. In addition, no doubt several of the five KAPD delegates also appeared at the RILU congress as representatives of the AAU. (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses 1921*, pp. 1068–71).

151 *Protokoll des III. Kongresses 1921*, pp. 672–90 (Zinoviev) and 690–706 (Heckert).

152 Earlier in the congress, Zinoviev had spoken twice of only 15 million supporters, again referring to data from Lozovsky. (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses 1921*, pp. 21 and 213).

In the plenary discussion on these reports, which took place on 4, 6 and 7 July, specific questions of trade-union policy were almost completely disregarded. (These matters would probably have been discussed in the trade-union commission set up by the congress). The dispute with the various syndicalist representatives occupied the forefront of this discussion. One of the issues here was the independence of the trade unions in the sense of the Charter of Amiens, in other words the question of their relationship with the Comintern. But the only person who spoke on this point was Tommasi, who represented the tendency around Rosmer and Monatte. He advocated co-operation between the two internationals on an equal footing. In this sense, he also defended the traditions of French syndicalism.

Another issue under discussion was whether to leave the reformist trade unions or stay inside them. The KAPD representative – who would also attend the RILU congress as an AAU delegate – advocated independent revolutionary organisations. He was supported in this by two IWW members, one of them being Haywood. They were strongly attacked by a number of other delegates, including Lozovsky, who put forward the opposing view that what was needed was communist ‘cell building’ in the reformist mass organisations, and a struggle to conquer them.¹⁵³

On 12 July, the last day of the Comintern congress, the day after the RILU congress had itself completed its discussion on the relations between the two internationals, the theses presented by the trade-union commission were adopted almost unanimously. There was one abstention. In these theses, the issue of principle was given considerable importance. They contained a detailed theoretical evaluation of the trade-union movement, a critique of the IFTU and a defence of the principle of cell-building. The resolution also contained a proposal for an action programme to be adopted by the RILU, and it laid down the principle of reciprocal representation of each international in their respective executives.¹⁵⁴ The ideas formulated in these theses did not differ from those that were presented in the resolutions of the RILU congress. The action programme, for example, was almost identical to the corresponding section of the RILU’s resolution on tactics apart from minor differences in formulation. What

153 The trade-union discussion is printed in *Protokoll des III. Kongresses* 1921, pp. 718–60 and 811–86.

154 *Protokoll des III. Kongresses* 1921, pp. 1050–7. Also printed in ‘Thesen über die Kommunistische Internationale und die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale’, *Thesen und Resolution des III. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale*, Hamburg, 1921, pp. 69–86 [English version, with some omissions: Degras 1956, pp. 274–81].

was different about it was that the tactical tasks were described as tasks for the communist parties.

Thus the decisions of the Comintern congress prejudiced any attempt by the RILU congress to arrive at its own decisions.¹⁵⁵ This was inevitable, given that the overwhelming majority of the delegates at the RILU congress belonged to communist parties and were therefore subject to the discipline of the Comintern. The discussions of the Comintern congress only differ from those of the RILU congress in their one-sided nature. The 'pure' syndicalists, who were opposed to any connection between the trade unions and a political party, did not take part in the Comintern congress. Some of them observed the congress as guests, it is true. But they reserved their interventions for the RILU congress, and this was a deliberate decision by the CNT delegates, for example, as Maurín later recalled.¹⁵⁶ They had been invited to the Comintern congress with the right to speak, but they simply attended a number of sessions as observers. When delegates at the Comintern congress spoke on behalf of syndicalist organisations, the IWW for example, they did so in the name of communist minorities or at least as close sympathisers with communism (such as Tommasi).¹⁵⁷ The 'real' delegates of the syndicalist unions then spoke at the RILU congress in a completely different vein, and in some cases they had to resist the claim by delegates at the Comintern congress to be admitted to the RILU congress with the right to speak.¹⁵⁸

If we compare the two congresses with each other, the significance of the RILU congress for the Comintern was that it clarified who among the 'pure' syndicalists was prepared to co-operate by agreeing to the line already decided by that body, and under what conditions they would do this. The decision to

155 It was certainly not a slip of the tongue by Zinoviev, but rather an expression of his own convictions, when he referred to 'our trade union international' in his report on the activities of the ECCI (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses* 1921, p. 213). This phrase was immediately quoted by George Williams with indignation in his report to the IWW (Williams 1921, p. 19).

156 Maurín 1966, p. 259.

157 It was to make sure that the syndicalist part of the spectrum was 'covered' that Tommasi was made one of the speakers at the opening session of the congress, alongside the representatives of an immense number of communist parties (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses* 1921, pp. 43–5).

158 Cascaden reports (p. 51) that one of the leaders of the American communists in the US delegation demanded this, but he was defeated in part by objections from members of his own party among the RILU delegates. The same party leader had been against allowing Cascaden to visit the Comintern congress as a guest, because he was prejudiced against political parties. Cascaden, on the other hand, was entirely in favour of allowing him to take part in the RILU congress as a guest, but without the right to speak.

hold the Comintern congress before the founding congress of the RILU turned out to be such an effective means of implementing the Comintern's political line that it was also applied in the case of the next two RILU congresses.

7 The Formation of the RILU Leadership: The First Session of the Central Council¹⁵⁹

According to the statutes agreed by the founding congress, the Central Council was the supreme directing body of the RILU in the intervals between its congresses. It was established at a meeting on 20 July directly after the end of the founding congress. (This first session of the council lasted four days). Before this happened, each individual delegation elected the members allotted to it according to the proportions established in the RILU statutes.¹⁶⁰

Four places on the council were given to Russia. They were taken up by Lozovsky, Nogin, Rykov and Tsyperovich.¹⁶¹ The representatives of countries with two places were: Anton Maier and Richard Müller for Germany,¹⁶² Tom Mann and Nat Watkins for Great Britain, George Andreychine¹⁶³ and Earl

159 The expression 'session' for the sittings of the Central Council did not become customary until its third session, in July 1923. It is used here right at the start for greater clarity.

160 See the list which was announced at the constituent sitting of the Central Council on 20 July, and is included in the published minutes: *Biulleten'*, no. 15. *Biulleten'*, no. 16 covers the minutes for 20 and 21 July. The RILU archive does not contain any minutes of these meetings. There is a short summary in *Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, 30 August 1921, pp. 29–32.

161 There are minutes of a meeting of the Russian delegation on 20 July, which decided on the names of the Russian representatives on the Central Council. According to this, Lozovsky announced that the CC had appointed these four Russian representatives. There were protests against this. It was said that this decision could only be provisional. The precise composition of the Russian group on the council must first be discussed with the bureau of the party fraction in the VTsSPS and also with the Russian delegation at the RILU congress. Evidently the leaders of the Russian trade-union movement felt that they had been ignored (GARF 545/13a/558/1).

162 Maier was unanimously elected by the German delegation, but Müller was only elected by a majority, with 28 votes against 23 cast for Heckert (SAPMO 1 2/708/46). This result thus followed the pattern of the previous decision on the question of how to organise the trade unionists expelled from the ADGB, where Heckert had also been placed in a minority.

163 Andreychine's inclusion in the Central Council and his later election to the Executive Bureau may appear surprising. It was plainly a manoeuvre directed against Williams, and in the course of the Central Council's first session he was the victim of a settling of political

Browder for the USA, Arlandis and Nin for Spain, and Hampel and Kundte for Czechoslovakia. All the other countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Ukraine, Norway, Australia, Switzerland, Canada, Mexico, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Far Eastern Republic, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Estonia and Abkhazia) received one place each.

It is clear from this list that many countries were not represented at all. Two places had been allotted to Poland, but no information was given about the Polish representatives (this may have been an oversight). Full explanations were given for the absence of Italy and France from the list, however. France could not be represented, since the mandate of the French delegation did not empower it to join the RILU at the congress. Whether it joined or stayed out could only be decided later on the basis of the results of the congress. The delegation therefore did not feel that it was in a position to send any representatives onto the Central Council. (The only Frenchman present was Rosmer, who had been elected by the delegation from Luxembourg). With the Italians the situation was still more complicated. Until the CGL had made its decision about joining, Lozovsky proposed that one seat should be allotted to a representative of the USI (its delegates arrived in the course of the meeting) and one to a representative of the communist minority in the CGL.¹⁶⁴ He added that he hoped that a CGL congress would soon decide definitely to join the RILU, and that the USI and the CGL would then unite into a single union. Neither of these expectations was realised. Hungary was also missing from the list. This was because the Hungarian delegation had not yet been able to agree on its representative.

After the Central Council had thus been constituted, Lozovsky proposed an extensive agenda, but it turned out that this had to be cut down to a small

accounts. As he wrote later (Williams 1921, p. 9): 'One of the most blatant examples of deception practised at the Red congress by the controlling political group was the election of Andreytchine as a member of the Executive Bureau ... He was not a delegate and had no mandate from any organisation. But he is a communist and is regarded (in Moscow) as an influential member of the IWW. I have reliable information that Andreytchine was chosen as America's representative on the Executive Bureau in a secret meeting of American communists in Moscow. And the majority of those who took part in this meeting were not even delegates at the RILU congress but instead delegates at the congress of the Third International'. He himself explains why this operation went smoothly: 'Shortly after my arrival in Moscow and after evaluating the situation ... I ceased to attend the meetings of the American delegation and refused to take any further part in their discussions. I could not bring myself to take part in such ridiculous activities' (see also the declaration he made to the FAUD against Andreytchine, in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 47, 1921).

164 The minutes do not reveal whether Lozovsky's proposal was accepted.

number of items. The most important item was undoubtedly the first one: the choice of the seven-member Executive Bureau of the RILU. Lozovsky proposed a list which contained only six candidates, 'in the name of a group of comrades'. The comrades in question were presumably leading members of the Bolshevik Party or the Comintern, who were consulted in advance.¹⁶⁵ The two who, according to the statute, had to come from the country where the RILU had its headquarters were Nogin and himself. The others on the list were Tom Mann, Arlandis, Andreytchine and Maier. The seventh place was to be kept free for a French or an Italian representative. The first organisation to complete the process of joining the RILU would receive this prize.¹⁶⁶ Lozovsky's list was unanimously accepted after the individual candidates had been given a thorough grilling. Tsyperovich then made the additional proposal to create a post of General Secretary (it was not provided for in the original statutes), which Lozovsky would fill. Tom Mann and Anton Maier would be his assistants.

The remainder of the first day's agenda was taken care of much more quickly: a message of thanks to all the technical collaborators who had helped to organise the founding congress was adopted, and the resolution on unemployment was passed to the Executive Bureau to be drafted properly. The Executive Bureau was also commissioned to draft two manifestos: one to the Italian workers, intended to hasten their decision on RILU membership, and one to the CGT congress which was scheduled to meet some days later in Lille.

The next meeting of the Central Council, on 21 July, was entirely taken up by two important items which involved the regulation of relations between the member organisations of the RILU. It was established, no doubt in recognition of the positive attitude of the Spanish delegation, that the CNT would be the central axis around which the work of the RILU's Spanish members had to be structured. The communist fractions in the reformist UGT were placed under the CNT. If they were expelled from the UGT, they had to join the CNT. If this did not happen, they should continue to fight to win leadership of the UGT but they should also take part in congresses of the CNT. This decision expressed a

165 The two Russian members at least had been chosen by the Bolshevik CC. Lozovsky informed the Russian delegation of this. (See note 161).

166 The USI delegation had arrived in Moscow in the meantime, and thus seemed to qualify. Some days later the three representatives with a syndicalist background (Mann, Arlandis and Andreytchine) proposed that the USI be given the seventh place on the Executive Bureau. This would have produced a quasi-syndicalist majority. It was decided instead to wait until the CGL and the CSRS had made their own decisions. (RGASPI 534/3/9/26 and 29).

realistic estimate of the relation of forces, in view of the fact that the CNT was stronger than the UGT, within which the communist fractions were in any case small minorities which had declared their affiliation to the RILU. This point had already been clarified in discussions between the CNT and the Spanish communists, and approved at a meeting of the Executive Bureau, so there were no problems when it came up before the Central Council for confirmation.¹⁶⁷ An agreement between the two sides, the CNT and the UGT minority, was then put in written form and made public at the final meeting of the Central Council.¹⁶⁸

Once again, the problem of the independent German 'unions' was a source of far greater conflict. They had attempted to read out a declaration in the final sitting of the founding congress, explaining their relationship with the RILU. Lozovsky did not allow this. Even so, the declaration was included in the minutes.¹⁶⁹ In it, the independence of separate revolutionary unions is once again emphatically defended, passages from congress resolutions attacking independence are rejected, and at the same time it is suggested that the anti-independence majority at the congress was based on artificial mandates. This method of approach, the declaration added, was bound to fail, it was opportunistic and it should be rejected. The final remark in the declaration, that the signatories would place the results of the congress before their members for further discussion, already implied that they might leave the RILU.

Lozovsky now sharply posed the question of whether they accepted, and would implement, the decisions of the congress. If not, they were placing themselves outside the RILU. The representatives of the independent unions who were present (Bartels of the FAU-Gelsenkirchen, Gieseler of the *Schiffahrtsbund*, and Disch of the AAU) tried to give a non-committal answer, but they insisted on the importance of the independent organisations they represented and pointed out the need to avoid anticipating the decisions of their congresses. Nin and the USI representative attempted to leave the door open to reconciliation with them, but the Central Council finally adopted a resolution which rejected the position of the 'unionist' delegates, emphatically called on them to put into effect the RILU's resolutions, characterised the assertion that the majority had been artificially created as slanderous and finally expressed

167 RGASPI 534/3/9/3.

168 It was also published in *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 3/4, 12 November 1921.

169 It is to be found both in *Biulleten*, no. 15 (where it is signed by the FAU-G and the AAU) and in the 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU' (where it also has the signature of the *Schiffahrtsbund*).

the hope that the members of the independent unions would not accept the breach with the RILU which their leaders were trying to enforce.¹⁷⁰

The central task that the final sitting of the Council had to perform was to deal with George Williams. In appearance, the issue at stake was Lozovsky's demand, with which he opened the discussion, that Williams show the mandate he had received from the IWW. At his first meeting with Lozovsky, Williams had told him he would show him his mandate at the next opportunity. But there was more to it than this. Clearly, Lozovsky wanted to demonstrate publicly that there was a contradiction between the positions Williams was mandated to uphold and his stubborn opposition at the congress. One of the speakers in the discussion, for example, accused Williams of voting against the RILU statutes, hence against the foundation of the RILU. But the IWW had set out that it could only decide on joining the RILU as an organisation after the congress had taken place (see chapter 3, section 6). Williams replied to Lozovsky that it was true that he had not shown him his written mandate. But he had given the oral explanation that the positions the IWW wanted him to put forward were based on the six points adopted by the Berlin conference.

Nin now made clear the intended outcome of this discussion. For him, Williams did not truly represent the attitude of the IWW rank and file. It was Andreytchine and Haywood, the people who had joined the communist party, who represented the grassroots. Andreytchine naturally agreed entirely with this evaluation, and he used the opportunity for another long attack on the anti-communist current among the Wobblies.

When Arlandis asked him directly whether the IWW would now join the RILU or not, Williams could only repeat what he had said already, that this could only be decided after his return to the USA and the delivery of his report. Dimitrov came out in support of Williams, from the opposite angle. There should be no illusions about the possibility of the IWW's affiliation. In view of the opposing standpoints, there was nothing else to do but to insist once again that Williams had not made his mandate available. An appeal should be made to the members of the IWW to stop hesitating and unite with the RILU. But after everything that had happened so far there could be no great expectation of success.

No problems were created by the transfer of money collected by the Russian trade unions to support Swedish metalworkers who had been locked out by the employers to an international solidarity fund which was to be set up. Nor was there any difficulty in agreeing on a message greeting the Argentine

170 The resolution is in *Biulleten'*, no. 16 and also in 'Bericht der Delegation der AAU'.

workers who were attending a unification congress of their two trade-union centres. Norway was a different matter, though. The way the Norwegians were vacillating between Amsterdam and Moscow had already provoked criticism. The Norwegian representative, Madsen, made a long speech in justification of their position. Their previous attitude had been an expression of the strong position of the social-democratic minority in a number of craft unions. So far the left current had been disunited. Some of the leftists favoured withdrawal from those unions. He was one. Others wanted to continue oppositional work within them. At the London IFTU congress, they had at least made no concessions. An extraordinary congress of the Norwegian trade unions had now to be called, and he had no doubt that it would vote to affiliate with the RILU. The Central Council, clearly impressed by Madsen's remarks, took note of them without further discussion. Just to make sure, however, Lozovsky put forward a resolution by which all the organisations represented at the founding congress had to implement its decisions – such as withdrawal from the IFTU, for instance – within three months, otherwise they would be automatically excluded from the RILU. It would soon become clear in any case that Madsen's optimism was completely unjustified.

Finally the Central Council took steps to put into effect the decision to establish an organic link with the Comintern, which had caused so much controversy at the founding congress.¹⁷¹ Having heard from Lozovsky that the ECCI had chosen Heckert, Bukharin and Souvarine as its representatives on the Central Council, the latter body elected Tom Mann, Nin (with Arlandis as his replacement) and Lozovsky as representatives of the RILU on the ECCI. Lozovsky concluded the sitting by informing the Council of the publications they were planning. The monthly journal *Die Internationale Arbeiterbewegung* (English version: The International Workers' Movement) would continue, while a weekly bulletin under the title *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale* (English version: The Red Labour Union International) would also be issued. Both publications would come out in four languages. (The bulletin began to appear at the end of August, but the plan was soon modified owing to the great difficulties exper-

171 Interestingly enough, the minutes published in the bulletin of the RILU congress do not contain a report on this fourth sitting of the Central Council. It has not been possible to establish whether this was for purely accidental reasons or a real unwillingness to give detailed information on the item of the agenda treated here. But there is a brief account of the sitting in the first issue of the new RILU bulletin and in nos. 39–40 (11 August 1921) of the *Biulleten' Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* (this was the new title given to the short-lived continuation of the Russian-language information bulletin of the ITUC).

enced in distributing it. See chapter 5, section 3). Numerous pamphlets, and, not least, the minutes of the founding congress, were also to be published.

With these sittings – which made up its first session – the Central Council had taken up the position of leadership envisaged for it in the RILU statutes. But it would soon appear that the difficulties involved in summoning it had been underestimated. It met ever more infrequently, and thus was constantly in breach of the intervals prescribed in the statutes. There were at first mainly technical reasons for this, related to the need to hold the meetings in Moscow. Soon, however, political difficulties emerged as well, owing to the factional struggles within the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern. As a result, the actual running of the RILU was taken over by the Executive Bureau, which was permanently based in Moscow.¹⁷² (After the second RILU congress, the statutes were brought into line with this changed situation; it was decided that both the Executive Bureau and the Central Council would be elected by the congress. This decision was in turn reversed in 1928, although this did not in practice make any difference). As time went on, the Central Council turned into a body summoned by the Executive Bureau to bolster its leading position by voting in favour of its decisions.

The Executive Bureau also underwent structural changes in subsequent months. Although particular individuals had originally been elected to it, and the majority of the Central Council understood its composition in this way, its membership would soon change. In line with the practice in other Bolshevik organisations, members of the Executive Bureau were recalled by the organisations they belonged to, and other people were co-opted instead. This practice was repeated with a vengeance after later RILU congresses, so that in practice

¹⁷² The real distribution of power already started to be apparent in the summer of 1921. When the congress commission was discussing the final form of the RILU statutes, the English delegation had wanted to write in a provision that the Executive Bureau was to work under the direct supervision of the Central Council. Lozovsky successfully resisted the idea by saying that this was a matter of course. But then, at the end of the third sitting of the congress, he announced that all questions that had not been dealt with, including the organisation of the RILU's agitation and propaganda, should be handed over to the Executive Bureau. An Austrian delegate protested against this. These matters involved important principles, he said. Either the Central Council should decide, or the Executive Bureau must at least be obliged to include the relevant delegates in its deliberations. Lozovsky got his way, however, and ensured that these matters were simply handed over to the Executive Bureau without the imposition of any obligation. A decision on what was seen here as a technical problem of organisation in fact amounted to a definite reduction in the powers of the elected leadership, the Central Council (*Biulleten'*, nos. 13 and 16).

the Executive Bureau was no longer composed of elected members. There was no resistance to this change, because the syndicalist opposition became completely fragmented after the founding congress.

8 The Establishment of the International Propaganda Committees

In some cases already before the founding congress, but in most cases in intervals between meetings of the congress, and also after the congress, there were meetings in Moscow between the representatives of workers in a total of 15 different branches of employment (metalworking and engineering, mining, textiles, transport, construction, woodworking, the food trade, leather work, clothing, municipal employment, education, the chemical industry, agricultural work and office work).¹⁷³ A number of ambiguous statements had been made at the congress itself about the impending establishment of a network of revolutionary internationals for individual trades, but these discussions within each branch followed the line set by the resolution on organisation, namely that although the International Trade Secretariats were now firmly attached to Amsterdam, this did not mean that all methods of doing revolutionary work inside them had been exhausted. International Propaganda Committees (IPCs) should be created for this purpose. Their job would be to combine together revolutionary minorities and trade unions so as to co-ordinate their activities, to propagate the class struggle within the ITSS and ultimately to take control of the latter. This must be done in close collaboration with the leadership of the RILU. Only in exceptional cases, however, when enough forces were available, and the RILU had resolved to do this, was it permissible to start creating a revolutionary trade-union international.¹⁷⁴

Attendance at the discussions, which was uneven, gave a clear picture of how strong the communist influence was in each individual branch of employment. The meetings held by the metalworkers, printers, building workers and transport workers were particularly well attended. The central item in these meetings was a report giving information on the situation in specific countries and on the development of the corresponding International Trade Secretariat, giving particular attention to their conferences, where they had already taken

¹⁷³ The minutes of these discussions are printed in *Biulleten'*, no. 17. There are short summaries in *Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 7, October 1921, pp. 135–9 and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, 30 August 1921 and no. 2, 12 September 1921.

¹⁷⁴ *Resolutionen, Statuten* 1921, pp. 59–61.

place since the end of the war. There were naturally delegates from the appropriate Russian trade union. Apart from this, delegates came predominantly from the revolutionary minorities in the reformist trade unions. But there were also complete, communist-led, trade unions present, as in the cases of Bulgaria and Norway, and there were some independent unions from the syndicalist and 'industrialist' end of the spectrum. The latter upheld their own principles of organisation, which meant that the debates echoed those at the RILU congress to some extent, though here their views met with even less success.

With the exception of the leather-workers, who assigned the job of international co-ordination to the international section of the CC of the Russian leather-workers union, the branch assemblies all created International Propaganda Committees. These committees contained representatives from the whole of Europe, elected according to a fixed ratio. But the committees were for the most part based in Moscow, and every IPC had a Russian representative as its secretary. This expressed the fact that the main burden of work lay on the shoulders of the Russian trade unions. They also had to bear the financial obligations, which were very rarely discussed at the branch assemblies, to the extent that these had not been shouldered in advance by the RILU itself. The printworkers alone proposed to finance their activity in part by the payment of subscriptions to an international journal.

By establishing the headquarters in Moscow they no doubt sought to guarantee the close connection with the RILU which was prescribed by the statutes. But in order not to lose any connection with Western Europe, the non-Russian members of the committees were given full powers in their own country, and where there were no non-Russian members, additional ones were appointed. Their task was to direct and co-ordinate the work of the relevant branch of industry, so as to make it possible to exert influence on an international scale on the ITSS. In line with this, the committee's attitude towards impending ITS congresses was the main point discussed at a number of the meetings. But from this point of view, the structure of the organisation of the IPCs, with its weighting towards Russia, did not turn out to be very appropriate. A shift of the headquarters towards Western Europe (in most cases to Berlin) began to seem necessary. Only after this did the question of setting up their own publicity organ become significant for most of the IPCs.

In addition, one of these IPCs was confronted with special problems. The fate of the Mineworkers' Propaganda Committee was decided by an external event: on 24 July, its members, led by the chairman of the Russian mineworkers' union, Artem-Sergeev, took part in a journey by an experimental train, which ended in a catastrophic accident, in which all the members of the committee were killed. All that remained of their discussions was the draft of an appeal to

the mineworkers of the world. A new committee had to be organised, and there was a big delay before it became active.

The discussions of the transport workers were distinguished by the fact that one of the organisations represented there, the NAS Transport Workers' Federation, was already a member of the corresponding International Trade Secretariat, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF). This led very quickly to a conflict within the latter body.¹⁷⁵ The transport workers' deliberations were also influenced by a political problem. This had emerged even before the RILU founding congress. It related to the place of the seamen within the organisation. There was a strong syndicalist presence among the seamen, and some syndicalists, in particular Tom Barker and the representatives of the *Schiffahrtsbund*, had already made preparations to set up a revolutionary seamen's international. A congress had been called for 1 August in Petrograd to found the new international. But this attempt at separate organisation contradicted the industry principle and therefore soon came under criticism, at a time when the invitation to the seamen's congress had already been distributed internationally.

The organisers of the seamen's congress were present at the discussions on founding an IPC for the transport workers, and they continued to face criticism there. There was a clash of contradictory opinions, with no decision either way. The lines of division were clearly political in nature. The advocates of a single, unified, transport workers' committee were communists and supporters of 'cell-building', while the representatives of the seamen's international were syndicalists or independent 'unionists'. These differences could not be settled conclusively, even though it did prove possible to elect an IPC and adopt statutes and a manifesto.

The international seamen's congress did not meet at the beginning of August in Petrograd, as originally planned. Its transfer to Moscow had already been decided before the RILU congress by the ITUC (see chapter 3, section 8), but it seems the decision was not communicated to all the delegates. At the beginning of August, Maurice Disch of the AAU and Emil Gieseler of the *Schiffahrtsbund* arrived in Petrograd, only to be informed by Tsyperovich that the meeting-place had been changed.¹⁷⁶

175 One of the representatives of the NAS transport workers was Bouwman, who was also a member of the executive committee of the ITF, one of its leading bodies, and he now became an elected member of the transport workers' International Propaganda Committee.

176 Both Disch and Gieseler wrote notes on their experiences, in diary form, describing not only the course of the seamen's congress, but also recording all the surrounding

The character of the seamen's congress was also altered. It met between 12–14 August as a joint conference with the transport workers' IPC.¹⁷⁷ The participants were Lozovsky, then Arlandis, both representing the Executive Bureau of the RILU, the director of the relevant section of the RILU apparatus, Gieseler, Rieger and Bittner from the *Schiffahrtsbund*, Disch from the AAU, two representatives of the Russian transport workers' union, Tom Barker, Julius Mühlberg of the Finnish seamen's union, two Australian trade unionists, one New Zealander, Williams from the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union of the IWW, and five representatives of the transport workers' IPC. After a certain amount of disagreement over the validity of the various mandates, the meeting agreed on the following distribution of voting rights: two votes each for Russia, Germany, Argentina, Australia and the USA, one vote each for Finland and New Zealand, and five votes for the IPC.

In his introductory report on the RILU and the role of the Propaganda Committees, Lozovsky indicated the line of approach which had already been implied in the discussions of the previous months: the IPCs should act in specific branches of industry, and for the moment they should not set up internationals to rival the existing ITSS attached to Amsterdam. If the seamen pressed forward with their plan to set up their own international secretariat, this would encourage imitation in other areas. And even Amsterdam would endeavour to combine all transport workers in a single international. The advocates of a seamen's international did not succeed in persuading the assembly with their arguments. It did not help them to point out that in the spring of that year the arguments had all pointed in the other direction. It was also objected that they only represented a small number of countries, too few in fact to found an international.

events and the informal discussions, and giving observations on the atmosphere at the time, including, in Disch's case, the RILU congress as well. Disch's diary was published (Disch 1921) while Gieseler's jottings were private notes that were confiscated by the police when he docked in the port of Stettin and written up by them afterwards. This was not an easy task, as Gieseler had used shorthand 'which the gentlemen had some difficulty in decoding', as Disch laconically remarked (Disch 1921, p. 48). There is a copy in the Staatsarchiv Bremen, in the files of the *Reichskommissar für die Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung* (StAB 4,65/616, Bl. 49–59) [I am grateful to Hartmut Rübner for calling my attention to this document – R.T.]. There are biographical details on Disch and Gieseler in Rübner 1994, pp. 100, 103 and 106.

177 The accounts by Disch and Gieseler should be compared, in particular, with the detailed minutes of the conference itself (*Otchet o konferentsii moriakov sovместno s predstaviteliami Mezhdunarodnogo Komiteta propagandy transportnykh rabochikh v Moskve 10–12 avgusta 1921g.*, Moscow, 1921).

This discussion was interrupted on the second day by the reading of detailed reports on the status of the seamen's movement in individual countries. It was taken up again on the final day of the conference. What was now needed was to draw the organisational consequences of the conference's decisions. Two resolutions were put forward. While the Executive Bureau proposed that the IPC be broadened by the addition of three seamen's representatives, thus firmly linking them to its work, the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the AAU had modified their position somewhat. They proposed that an international seamen's union should be set up under a single name, but they conceded that it would not be an independent international but only a part of the IPC. Bureaux would be set up in the biggest ports of the world – 14 were mentioned by name – to organise the seamen. These would be, as it were, the basic organisations of the international seamen's union. (The RILU proposal, in contrast, had only provided for the establishment of information points in the ports, which clearly would not have the same importance as was allotted to them in the German proposal). The RILU resolution passed with 10 votes against the five in support of Disch's and Rieger's proposal, which only received the additional votes of Barker and Mühlberg. The Russian proposal thus gained its majority only through the five votes of the IPC. The bitterness of the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the AAU was correspondingly great. Gieseler declared that there was nothing more to be gained here, to which Arlandis replied: 'You are playing into the hands of the counter-revolution!' Disch, Gieseler, Bittner and Mühlberg left the meeting, though Barker remained behind. He was also chosen as one of the three supplementary seamen's representatives in the IPC, along with an Australian by the name of Casey and the Russian Achkanov. On 15 August, the Executive Bureau proceeded to put these decisions into effect.¹⁷⁸ Sirolle and Khain were given the job of writing an international manifesto, in which the results of the conference would be described,¹⁷⁹ and a bureau for communications and information was to be set up within the IPC in order to make a start with the creation of the bureaux at each port. A meeting of the IPC, held on the same day, discussed the concrete steps that needed to be taken to this end.¹⁸⁰

Hence the establishment of a revolutionary seamen's international did not occur, despite a number of further initiatives by the *Schiffahrtsbund* in the next few months, which were in any case more in the nature of a desperate last resort. In the 'Third Period' of Comintern policy after 1929, however, the idea

¹⁷⁸ RGASPI 534/3/9/57.

¹⁷⁹ Printed in *Otchet o konferentsii moriakov* 1921, pp. 24–5.

¹⁸⁰ There is a report on this meeting and a long resolution of the IPC on its future tasks in *Otchet o konferentsii moriakov* 1921, pp. 21–3.

would again resonate, albeit weakly, with the formation of the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers, though this had absolutely nothing of the character of a syndicalist grassroots organisation. On the other hand, the Port Bureaux which were now set up, as a part of the rejected proposal that survived, had a greater significance. They became more than mere centres for agitation. They attempted to take care of the seamen in many ways and to organise them. They also took up conspiratorial activities, thus fulfilling the idea expressed in spring 1921, typically by the syndicalists, that they could create something like a secret communications network, though the Port Bureaux should not be reduced to this and nothing else.¹⁸¹

The International Propaganda Committee of the teachers, whose 'branch of industry' in any case hardly stood at the centre of the RILU's activities, experienced an entirely different development. This would quickly lead to its disbandment – it was the only IPC to be disbanded. It had been founded in the middle of July 1921. A representative of the International of Educational Workers, Jörg Mager, had taken part in founding it. This international association – called in French *Internationale de l'Enseignement* – had itself been established in August 1920 by left-wing teachers' unions.¹⁸² The initiative for this had proceeded from the French union of primary school teachers, which was a member of the CGT but was very much involved in the CSR movement. Its congress in Bordeaux had also provided the forum for the establishment of the international association.¹⁸³

181 Their later reputation as a secret apparatus rests on the activities of, for example, the Wollweber group, which engaged in sabotage actions in the navy during the 1930s, and, not least, on their literary reflection in the autobiography of a seaman who was former communist activist, the 'Diary of Hell' by Krebs-Valtin. (On this subject, see Dieter Nelles, 'Jan Valtins "Tagebuch der Hölle". Legende und Wirklichkeit eines Schlüsselromans der Totalitarismustheorie', 1999, *Zeitschrift für Sozialgeschichte des 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts*, no. 1, 1994, pp. 11–45).

182 On the origins of the International of Educational Workers, see Hermann Schorbach, *Lehrer im Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbund. Entstehung und Entwicklung des Internationalen Berufssekretariats der Lehrer von 1918 bis 1945*, Weinheim–Munich, 1989, pp. 21–2, and Wolfgang Stöhr, *Lehrer und Arbeiter bewegung. Entstehung und Politik der ersten Gewerkschaftsorganisation der Lehrer in Deutschland 1920–1923*, 2 vols., Marburg, 1978, vol. 2, pp. 478–84.

183 On the tradition of revolutionary syndicalism among the primary school teachers, the 'Instituteurs', and their significance for the French trade-union movement as also for the whole society as fighters for secularism in education, see Francis McCollum Feeley, *Rebels with causes: a study of revolutionary syndicalist culture among the French primary school teachers between 1880 and 1919*, New York, 1989. There is also a history of this trade union

To be precise, the decision to create an international organisation made in August 1920 was no more than a declaration of intention at first. The actual foundation of the International of Educational Workers was expected to take place in Prague in the summer of 1921. Mager, as the spokesman of the socialist teachers' movement in Germany, was empowered by the French to prepare this meeting. He then travelled to Moscow, to spread the word about his International around the fringes of the Third Comintern Congress and the RILU founding congress. As a result, he took part in the discussions on setting up an International Propaganda Committee among the teachers.

The situation at these discussions was peculiar for one more reason. There were reformist teachers' unions, led by Social Democrats, in many countries. But there existed no International Trade Secretariat attached to the IFTU for the teachers' unions. The International of Educational Workers stood very much to the left of Amsterdam, but it was also strongly influenced by pacifism, and this led the Soviet side to take up a waiting attitude, and to form its own revolutionary propaganda committee before taking any further steps. After lengthy deliberation – which led to the conclusion that the fight in the international trade-union movement was between Moscow and Amsterdam, not Moscow and Bordeaux – the RILU decided to leave the question of its attitude to the International of Educational Workers open for the moment. It would take a positive attitude to its planned congress, and seek to influence it. Mager would take part unofficially in the work of the teachers' IPC.

as an organisation, produced by leading activists of the 1920s and 1930s. They started off as revolutionary syndicalists, then became communists, and were finally expelled from the party at the end of the 1920s, though they remained on the revolutionary left. See François Bernard, Louis Bouët, Maurice Dommanget and Gilbert Serret, *Le syndicalisme dans l'enseignement. Histoire de la Fédération de l'Enseignement des origines à l'unification de 1935. Présentation et notes de Pierre Broué*, 3 vols., Grenoble, n.d. Volume 2, pp. 148–50 and 211–13 of this work provides some details on the role of this trade union in the establishment of the International of Educational Workers. Its situation was also determined by the fact that it had a rival in the shape of the *Amicales* ('Circle of Friends'), which was equally secularist but at first more of a professional association. After the end of the war, the *Amicales* also moved towards a more trade-union oriented position. It joined the CGT, but remained entirely reformist in character, whereas the Teachers' Union (*Fédération de l'Enseignement*) stood on the side of the revolutionary opposition. After the CGT split, the former *Amicales*, now renamed the *Syndicat*, remained with the old CGT, while the *Fédération de l'Enseignement* became a member of the CGTU. Towards the end of the 1920s, this trade union, which was incidentally very small, became a stronghold of the left opposition against the stalinisation of the CGTU, which also had an echo in the RILU.

But the expected founding congress of the International of Educational Workers in Prague did not take place immediately. It did not happen until the following year, in Paris, in August 1922. In the meantime, the CGT had split and the French teachers' union, the *Fédération de l'Enseignement*, had joined the CGTU. It would be more than another year before the communist attitude towards the teachers' international became completely clear, with the result that the Russian teachers' union became affiliated to it. In contrast to this, Amsterdam's attempts to set up an ITS for education turned out to be initially unsuccessful.

Some IPC branches were still missing, in comparison with the 29 ITSS which already existed and were recognised by Amsterdam at this time.¹⁸⁴ This was mainly because of the application of the principle of an industrial rather than a craft basis, so that separate IPCs were not founded, even later on, for glass-workers, diamond workers and hairdressers, for instance. In any case, IPCs of this kind had very little weight in the IFTU. In more important branches, such as restaurant employees, medical personnel and, last but not least, postal, telegraph and telephone workers, IPCs were founded later. The main reason why this did not happen in summer 1921 was that the relevant Russian trade unions had difficulties in organising them. When these had been overcome, they also began to exert influence on the appropriate ITSS. Thus the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI) was eventually to be involved in very intensive discussions about the Russians' request to affiliate.

The establishment of the International Propaganda Committees after the RILU congress gave rise to great hopes. Like so many other expectations expressed at that congress, they were not to be realised in the future.

184 This is the number given officially for the end of 1921. It was to undergo some slight variations in subsequent years (*First Report on the Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions* 1922, p. 22).

From the First to the Second Congress of the RILU

1 Should the RILU be Disbanded? Resignations and Demands for Liquidation

The position of the RILU appeared to be unassailable, as it rested on the firm ground of the Comintern, which was anchored in a number of mass parties and firmly established by the decisions of the Third Congress. But its whole *raison d'être* was already being questioned by several parts of the trade-union spectrum immediately after the founding congress had come to an end.

The attack that presented the smallest threat came from Italy and was mounted by the CGL. As we have seen, this union had only joined the RILU in order to exert pressure for the retention of the Socialist Party's membership of the Comintern. The RILU foundation congress, however, faced as it was with so many ifs and buts from the CGL's delegates (Pillon's expression),¹ had asked them the direct question: are you for Moscow or Amsterdam?

The CGL leadership did not hurry to receive its delegation's report. The reading of the report was postponed from the session of the *Consiglio Direttivo* [Executive Council] of 5–7 September to that of 8–9 October. Even after the report had been heard, a resolution was not adopted, but instead delayed until some time after the congress of the Socialist Party (10–15 October).² Since this congress refused to expel the reformists around Turati as demanded by the Comintern, the PSI thereby completed its break with that organisation, placing itself outside it.³ This determined the decision of the trade unions as well. The PSI discussed the situation with the CGL leadership on 15 October. A resolution was adopted, at the suggestion of the socialists, confirming the pact between the party and the trade unions, and declaring that the CGL would uphold the principles of the RILU, but would do this within the unified international trade-union movement, in other words Amsterdam.⁴

1 Pillon 1972, p. 95.

2 Marchetti 1962, pp. 338 and 340.

3 Spriano 1967, vol. 1, pp. 159–60. The general situation of the country, the economic crisis and the advance of the Fascists, which together led to a sharp decline in the workers' movement, naturally form part of the background to the PSI's break with the Communist International, but these issues cannot be examined here.

4 A. Losowsky, 'Die italienische Gewerkschaftsbewegung am Scheidewege', *Die rote Gewerk-*

In the meantime, however, the CGL leaders discovered another area where they could not agree with Moscow. In September 1921, the representative of the RILU, Nikol'sky, arrived in Italy to start the process of unifying the USI, the CGL and the autonomous unions, such as the railway workers, in line with previous decisions.⁵ The secretariat of the CGL found an excuse for postponement: before doing anything, it was necessary first to establish the precise relationship of forces between the different organisations. In any case, it was now a prerequisite for any merger that they all recognise the pact between the CGL and the PSI.⁶ Nikol'sky had to return to Moscow without accomplishing his task. (Meanwhile the USI too had taken a path that would lead it away from Moscow, as we shall show later).

The final decision was made at the session of the *Consiglio Nazionale* [National Council] of the CGL held from 5–7 November 1921.⁷ The way was now free for the CGL leadership to leave the RILU. According to D'Aragona, the prerequisites for CGL affiliation to the RILU which had been set by the Livorno congress, namely the PSI's membership of the Comintern and the recognition of a single national trade-union centre by that organisation, were no longer fulfilled. It was decided, over the protests of the communists, who countered D'Aragona's arguments by saying that a congress decision could only be reversed by a new congress,⁸ to remain in the Amsterdam international, in line with the above-mentioned resolution of 15 October, adopted jointly with the PSI. The affirmations of solidarity with the Russian Revolution which were also contained in the resolution, and the announcement that they would transform the IFTU into 'an active force on the terrain of class struggle and internationalism', were no doubt intended simply to provide a verbal guarantee against attacks from the left.⁹ (Most of the trade-union leaders belonged to the

schafts-Internationale, no. 8, 15 November 1921, pp. 7–13; Igor Kun, 'Die Gewerkschaftsbewegung in Italien und die RGI', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 8, 10 December 1921.

5 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. An den zweiten Kongress der revolutionären Gewerkschaften in Moskau* 25. November 1922, Berlin, 1922, p. 119.

6 Marchetti 1962, pp. 340–1.

7 Marchetti 1962, pp. 345–6, and 'Die Konferenz des Nationalrates des italienischen Gewerkschaftsbundes', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 6, 26 November 1921.

8 It does not require much imagination to visualise what would have happened in the opposite situation, in other words if a communist majority had reversed a congress decision in this way. After the *Consiglio Nazionale* had met, the communists resolved to conduct a campaign for the calling of an extraordinary congress, but they did not succeed, because the next CGL congress did not take place until December 1924.

9 The resolution is printed in *La Confederazione generale del Lavoro negli anni 1921–1924*, Milan, 1924, p. 62.

reformist wing of the party. When the reformists were expelled in October 1922, after another change of direction by the PSI, and went on to found their own party, the CGL leaders cancelled their pact with the Socialists and affiliated to the new party).¹⁰ The IFTU immediately showed its appreciation. In Amsterdam, they regarded the CGL leadership's announcement of their intention to pursue the class struggle within the IFTU as a piece of window-dressing. The Amsterdamers offered to make Rome the location of their next international congress, and the CGL accepted this offer, for which they were undoubtedly grateful.¹¹

In reality, one can hardly call the decision of the CGL to leave the RILU a split. Apart from signing the foundation manifesto of the ITUC and voting to join the RILU at the Livorno congress, the CGL had had no more to do with the RILU than previously with the ITUC. It had taken no practical part in its organisation. The only contribution it had made in this direction was the attempt, made shortly before the founding congress met, to change the location of the congress and to postpone it. After this, there were no further initiatives from the CGL; fundamentally it was just looking for the easiest pretext for a break. The further existence of the RILU was not put in question by the loss of the CGL. It was not even threatened. The Executive Bureau of the RILU sharply condemned the joint resolution of 15 October on what it called the 'platonic pursuit' of RILU principles within the IFTU, as well as the CGL's refusal to support the unification of the different Italian trade union organisations.¹² After that it did not make any further comment.

In contrast to this, the existence of the RILU was much more directly threatened by the vacillations of the Norwegian Trade Union Federation [*Arbeidernes faglige landsorganisasjon*, or AFL]. The AFL had in a sense become a member organisation of the RILU through its connection with the Norwegian

10 The CGL's constant reaffirmation of its pact with the PSI, to which it claimed to be bound, and which, as is well-known, ascribed political leadership to the party, is somewhat ironical, since its argument against the RILU, also made by the reformist element, was always that the communists put trade-union autonomy in question by subordinating the unions to a political party. This demonstrates that this argument was purely a pretext on the part of the CGL leaders. It was part of their factional manoeuvring within the PSI.

11 Marchetti 1962, p. 346.

12 RGASPI 534/3/9/173 and 174. Published in *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 8, 10 December 1921. On 28 December, the Italian communists sent a report to the Central European Bureau (MEB) on their fractional activity in the CGL at this time, which is printed in Adolfo Pepe, 'I Comunisti e la CGdL. (1920-1921)', *Incontri meridionali*, no. 1/2, 1992, pp. 9-100, here pp. 69-78.

Workers' Party, which belonged to the Comintern. It had participated in the founding congress of the RILU. On the other hand, it was also represented at the IFTU's London congress in November 1920 as an old-established member. There it had proved to be an extreme left wing of the Amsterdam international, even more strongly to the left than the Italians. The Norwegian trade unions had already declared at a previous meeting (when the Russian trade-union delegation headed by Lozovsky came to Christiania in the summer of 1920) that their membership of the IFTU was the result of a decision by a congress and therefore could only be cancelled by a similar decision.¹³ The AFL had assured the RILU in the course of the Moscow discussions that this would rapidly take place.

But forces opposed to Moscow were also active in the Norwegian labour movement. At the start of 1921, a social-democratic party had been set up in Norway. It would remain insignificant in electoral terms (and in 1925 it rejoined the Norwegian Workers' Party, which in the meantime had ceased to belong to the Comintern), but it had a certain amount of influence in a number of traditional craft unions.

In August 1921, the General Council of the AFL, which was the highest authority in the union between congresses, debated the report from the Norwegian delegation that had attended the RILU congress.¹⁴ It was proposed to present the question of continued membership in the IFTU or affiliation to the RILU to the individual member trade unions, and then to decide in accordance with the results of the consultation at the next meeting of the General Council. This proposal was rejected, and the meeting accepted instead a motion put forward by a social democrat to postpone the decision until the next congress of the AFL, which was scheduled for 1923. This meant that they would continue to be members of the IFTU for the present.¹⁵

Radical forces in Norway's trade unions immediately expressed opposition to this decision. Their views were articulated at a conference of predom-

13 As Lozovsky reported in his open letter to the CGL (Losowski, *Offener Brief*, Berlin, 1920, p. 7).

14 For what follows, see the article by Einhart Lorenz, 'Norwegens Gewerkschaften zwischen Amsterdam und Moskau: Versuche eines Brückenbaus', *Internationale Tagung der Historiker der Arbeiterbewegung*, 16. Linzer Konferenz 1980, Vienna, 1982, pp. 182–200, here in particular pp. 182–7.

15 The argument of those who opposed joining the RILU, namely because in that case the Norwegian member organisations of the AFL would have to leave their ITSS, played a definite role in this decision. There was also the question of pan-Scandinavian co-operation, which appeared to be endangered by RILU membership.

antly radical local trade-union groups in November. This induced the secretariat of the AFL, which was also controlled by left forces, to ignore the decision of the General Council and to ask the individual trade unions for their views.

In view of this situation, the Executive Bureau of the RILU endeavoured to push for a favourable decision by using the Comintern's influence on the Norwegian Workers' Party.¹⁶ The RILU appealed in an open letter to the Norwegian trade unions to decide in favour of Moscow and to call an extraordinary congress for this purpose. Joining Moscow, the letter added, did not jeopardise either their membership of the ITSS or co-operation across the whole of Scandinavia.¹⁷ In November, a delegation from the Norwegian Workers' Party, some of whose members also occupied leading positions in the AFL, visited Moscow and held detailed discussions. The delegation signed up to a joint manifesto by the ECCI and the Executive Bureau of the RILU which, among other things, emphatically appealed to the trade unions to break with Amsterdam and join the RILU.¹⁸ The chairman of the AFL, Lian, and a member of the secretariat, Olsen, promised at a meeting with the Executive Bureau that they would begin agitation for this immediately after their return to Norway.¹⁹

While the individual trade unions conducted their discussions on the relationship with Moscow, in the course of which the outlines of a majority tendency towards a break with Amsterdam emerged,²⁰ the secretariat of the AFL undertook a surprising initiative. On 17 January 1922, it sent identical letters to the RILU and the IFTU with the proposal that they summon a world conference of trade unions to confront the offensive of capital and the danger of war.²¹ On 17 February, this resulted in a meeting in Brussels between the IFTU bureau and Lian, who officially continued to represent a national trade-union centre which was a member of the Amsterdam international. The IFTU bureau again confirmed the position of Amsterdam on this question: they were ready to negotiate with an 'authorised representative' of the Russian trade unions,

16 See the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Bureau on 23 and 26 September (RGASPI 534/3/9/107 and 118).

17 'Offener Brief an die Gewerkschaftsorganisationen Norwegens', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 6, 16 November 1921.

18 'Die norwegischen Gewerkschaften und die RGI', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 9, 17 December 1921.

19 RGASPI 534/3/9/184-6.

20 This showed that there was no great danger that unions would be forced to leave their ITSS if the AFL affiliated to the RILU.

21 RGASPI 534/3/23/33.

but with no one else.²² The IFTU regarded any kind of meeting with the RILU as inconceivable. With this, the Norwegian proposal fell to the ground.

The RILU was not happy about this initiative. The initial reaction of the Executive Bureau, on 9 February, was to appeal to the Norwegians to wait for the decision of the Central Council, which was due to meet in a second session in the next few weeks. Moreover, proposals of this kind to Amsterdam ought in general to be agreed first with the RILU.²³ But before the Central Council could take a position on this at its next session, which was held between 25 February and 5 March 1922, the meeting at Brussels had created a *fait accompli*. Even so, the Central Council accepted the step the Norwegians had taken. It was, however, October before the AFL gave up its membership of the IFTU. As late as April, Lian represented the AFL at the IFTU congress in Rome, though he did not play a particularly prominent part in it.²⁴

Although it could not yet be predicted what course the complex developments among the Norwegians would take, Lozovsky was entirely right to conclude 'this means we have suffered a defeat in Norway and Italy',²⁵ when at the end of 1921 he summed up the situation after an exhaustive presentation of both cases before the plenum of the VTsSPS. There was in fact yet another country where the RILU was compelled to retreat at this time. This was Finland. The

22 'Mitteilung des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes über die Frage der Einheitsfront', *Die Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, March/April 1922, p. 71.

23 RGASPI 534/3/23/32 and 33.

24 In October, the General Council of the AFL finally decided to leave the IFTU by a large majority (65 to 15 with five abstentions). This decision was made public at the 10/11 November meeting of the IFTU bureau. The only public commentary the bureau gave was to say that according to the statutory provisions on the giving of notice, the Norwegian trade-union federation continued to have obligations, in other words contributions had to be paid, until the end of 1923. (See *Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 250, 24 November 1922). The AFL was supposed to decide in the following year whether leaving the IFTU should be followed by adherence to the RILU. In fact, the Norwegian trade unions, like the Norwegian Workers' Party, which found itself disagreeing ever more strongly with the Comintern during 1922, disagreements which were followed by a complete break in 1923, and the splitting off of a separate communist party, adopted an independent international line, and as we shall show later endeavoured for years to mediate in order to restore international unity. The AFL regarded itself as in critical solidarity with the Russian Revolution and rejected social-democratic reformism. No less important was the fact that this independent attitude turned out to be of advantage in maintaining the organisational unity of the Norwegian trade unions.

25 'Bericht über die Lage der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung', *Rotes Gewerkschafts-bulletin*, no. 9, 17 December 1921.

Finnish trade unions were split between social democrats and (illegal) communists. The Finnish delegation at the RILU congress had only represented the communist minority.²⁶ In 1921, the Finns had first declared in favour of independence from both sides, so as to secure organisational unity. This in itself expressed a clear move away from Amsterdam. In March 1922, the unions held a referendum among their 30,000 members. 13,000 voted to affiliate with the RILU, and 6,000 the IFTU. A large proportion of the membership had refrained from taking part.

In this situation, the Executive Bureau decided at the beginning of May to abandon for the moment the idea of bringing the Finnish trade unions into the RILU, and instead to try to persuade the trade unionists who had stood aside from the vote to come over to Moscow; any other course would have led to a risk of a split by the pro-IFTU minority.²⁷ The Finnish trade-union movement, which had been severely weakened by the adverse political situation in the country after the defeat of the 'Reds' in the civil war of 1918, was under communist control until the end of the 1920s. During this period it attempted, like the Norwegian AFL, to utilise its organisational independence by inserting itself as an international mediator between Amsterdam and Moscow.

It was not just in the trade-union sphere that there was a move away from the RILU shortly after its foundation. The demand for its liquidation was also raised in the international communist movement. It surfaced in the KPD, a party which had been torn apart since the spring of 1921 by severe internal conflicts. These conflicts crystallised around the activities of Paul Levi, the former chairman who had been expelled in the aftermath of the March Action. He had gathered together a number of critical party cadres and in September 1921 he founded a new organisation, the 'Communist Working Group' (KAG).²⁸ This was initially conceived as an opposition current within the KPD, aimed at its regeneration.

26 This was stated by the mandate commission. See *Biulleten*, no. 14.

27 RGASPI 534/3/23/105 and 115; *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 107–8; 'Korrespondenz aus Finnland', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 5, September/Okttober 1922, pp. 294–5.

28 On the KAG and in general on the situation in 1921 and the conflicts within the KPD, see the fundamental study by Koch-Baumgarten (1986). This can be supplemented by the earlier study by Werner T. Angress (1972), and the account given from the GDR angle by Reisberg (1971), which is particularly rich in material in this area. There is also an unpublished dissertation by Bernd D. Fritz dealing specifically with the KAG, though this is concerned mainly with its political programme and only briefly touches on its history as an organisation (Fritz 1966).

Its spokesmen, from Levi downwards, were in many cases parliamentary deputies, and thus stood at the centre of public attention. They were immediately expelled from the party. But in making their criticisms, they could count on the agreement, or at least the sympathy, of a large number of party functionaries, particularly among active trade unionists. The Levi opposition arose from a rejection of the putschism shown in the March Action, and, appealing to the authority of Rosa Luxemburg, it called for a fundamental change in the party's tactics. The party should start a real struggle to win over the majority of the working class, it said. In addition, it attacked Moscow's intervention into the affairs of communist parties. The main points of criticism in this context were an overestimation of the revolutionary crisis, a lack of realism and a growing orientation towards the needs of Soviet Russia alone. The RILU also became a target of the opposition's criticism.²⁹

Levi had questioned the need for the RILU, almost in passing, at the time when it was holding its first congress. The decision to found the RILU, he said, had emerged from the 'rapid advance of the revolution'. The slackening of the revolutionary impulse now raised the question of whether the same tactic that was being pursued nationally should not be pursued at the international level, in other words, that there should be no attempt to split the international movement. The RILU continued to have great significance as a 'phrase', but without any immediate organisational consequences.³⁰ By saying this, Levi had put his finger on the fundamental dilemma of the RILU, with its differing approaches at the national and international levels. The KPD press naturally protested vehemently against this view, and it was able in turn to ask Levi why he himself had acted as godfather to the RILU's predecessor, the ITUC, at the Second Comintern Congress.³¹ Three months later, Levi made another attack on the RILU, but he went much further now, roundly rejecting the whole of the trade-union tactic embodied in the concept of 'cell-building'. As far as the Amsterdam international was concerned, he added, the Comintern had just approached it ask-

29 As Fritz points out: 'The trade union question was a central point in the programme of the KAG, and its specific characteristic was the desire to work together within the framework of the Amsterdam international' (1966, p. 112).

30 Paul Levi, 'Die Aufgaben der Kommunisten', *Unser Weg (Sowjet)*, no. 5, 1 July 1921, pp. 138–44.

31 'Der Levigeist – der Geist des Pessimismus', *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 26, 16 July 1921. See also 'Die Levi-Gruppe gegen die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 315, 13 July 1921. These replies to Levi were backed up by referring to the information given at the RILU founding congress, which allegedly demonstrated the mass influence the RILU had already achieved.

ing for its aid in organising international hunger relief for Russia.³² In general, he thought, the potential offered by the Amsterdam international should be used for the economic reconstruction of Russia. His conclusion was this: 'Even in better times, the "Red Trade Union International" was not what it could be, or wanted to be. Let it now return to its maker in peace. The trade unions, in their present form, offer "room enough for the whole of humanity"; and once they have been conquered, this will be a great achievement for communism, much greater than the continued existence of a Red International which is unable to live but also unable to die'.³³ Levi endeavoured to suggest that communist trade-union work would be easier if the communists abandoned the construction of the RILU, because they would then provoke less resistance from the trade-union leaders. His opponents countered this argument, however, by referring back to the experience of the KPD in the period before the foundation of the ITUC.³⁴

At first Levi did not appear to receive much of a response to his campaign. Apart from a small number of articles, the KPD leadership did not react. Even so, the assessment it made after the foundation congress of the RILU was not entirely untroubled. The KPD was by and large satisfied with the decisions on the independent unions and the organisation of the expelled workers. But it recognised that the formulations arrived at in regard to these matters were somewhat in the nature of a compromise, and that only the future would show whether they would continue to be observed in a situation of close collaboration with the RILU.³⁵

What was of decisive importance now was the fact that the party had moved away from the 'ultra-left' policy associated with the March Action, under pressure from Lenin and Trotsky and the Third Comintern Congress in general. The party congress held in Jena between 22–26 August brought a new leadership to

32 See section 3 of this chapter.

33 Paul Levi, 'Einiges über die Gewerkschaftsfrage', *Unser Weg (Sowjet)*, no. 12, October 1921, pp. 336–41, here p. 340. The article by Otto Kunze, 'Zur Gewerkschaftsfrage', mentioned earlier, displayed a similar logic, though he did not go so far as to call for the disbandment of the RILU.

34 The party's national trade-union centre (*Reichsgewerkschaftszentrale*, or RGZ), in reporting on its activity to the KPD congress held in August 1921, drew attention to the experience of Ottomar Geschke in summer 1920, when he was expelled from the Union of Railway Workers. (See chapter 3, section 5, and *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2. Parteitages* 1922, p. 33).

35 'Der Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 32, 27 August 1921.

the top. The new general secretary of the KPD was Ernst Reuter, the previous secretary of the Berlin KPD (who was much later to become the mayor of West Berlin). Reuter was known in the KPD by his party name Friesland, and we shall refer to him by this name from now on.³⁶

The KPD's course correction had an impact in many areas, not least in trade-union policy. Previously the party's central demand in controversies within the trade unions had been affiliation to the Moscow trade-union international. Now this demand was officially shifted to the background. Instead of this, the fight for immediate, day-to-day demands was to be emphasised. The RGZ's report to the congress contained the following criticism: 'The conflict between the opposition and the bureaucracy was fought out under the slogan: Moscow or Amsterdam. There is no doubt that our comrades proceeded somewhat too schematically in this fight. They arranged innumerable meetings on the stereotyped theme of Moscow or Amsterdam. It was inevitable that the working masses would get tired of this. The fundamental divergence in conceptions which is symbolised by the words Moscow or Amsterdam must be given a somewhat more concrete form'.³⁷ Walcher repeated this advice in his report on the trade-union question.³⁸ Even though no one reverted back to this point – the discussion on this item of the agenda mainly dealt with their attitude to independent 'unionism' – and it did not surface explicitly in the resolution on trade unions, the concrete instructions on trade-union work within that resolution made it plain that the advice had been taken.³⁹

Accordingly, the course of the national conference of communist trade unionists held just after the party congress (27–28 August) was dominated by an examination of the results of the latest trade-union conferences and a discussion of the impending round of wage-contracts. It was only in passing, as it were, that Heckert, in his report on the RILU congress, recalled that when the ITUC was founded, 'some comrades' had not considered even this body to be viable. And Walcher, in his report on the RGZ, mentioned the opinion of some of its members that it had been a mistake to establish the RILU. The impression left by these remarks is that of a temporary mood which had no real impact on

36 The Jena congress was also greeted by a representative of the RILU, Iuzefovich. See *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2. Parteitages* 1922, pp. 145–8.

37 *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2. Parteitages* 1922, p. 32.

38 He said, among other things: 'It seems to me that it is more important to act in the spirit of Moscow than to talk in the spirit of Moscow' (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2. Parteitages* 1922, p. 355).

39 For the discussion, see *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2. Parteitages* 1922, pp. 360–370, and for the resolution, pp. 425–9.

intra-party controversies. The fact that these comments were not picked up in the discussion allows us to conclude that they did not play a role, at least not at that time. The problems which were discussed at the conference were their relationship with the independent unions and the organisation of the expelled trade unionists. Admittedly, the discussion was made more intense by the link with the policies of the RILU.⁴⁰

The KPD's new method of work was noticeable very soon, at the conference of the metalworkers' union, the DMV, the most important member organisation of the ADGB, which was held between 12–18 September in Jena. The speakers for the KPD fraction consistently avoided mentioning the RILU, concentrating instead on current trade-union matters, although they made plenty of sharp attacks on the trade-union leadership. Dißmann, the chairman of the DMV, tried to put them on the spot: 'Five people have spoken for the KPD. I ask you: Has any of these speakers said anything about the conflict between Moscow and Amsterdam?'⁴¹ But the delegates who were members of the KPD evidently knew very well why they ought not to comply with his obvious wish to engage in a dispute of this kind.⁴² They also largely avoided entering into any discussion

40 See the minutes of the conference, in SAPMO 1 2/708/1. (On the course of this conference, see also Annette Neumann, *Die Entwicklung der Gewerkschaftskonzeption der Kommunistischen Internationale unter Berücksichtigung der Gewerkschaftsarbeit der KPD von 1919 bis 1922*, PhD dissertation, Academy of Social Sciences, Berlin, 1986, pp. 68–73). The conference was followed on 29 August by a meeting between 'all the organisations belonging to the RILU and its sympathising organisations', in other words the KPD trade unionists in the ADGB met with representatives of the various independent unions (on this, see chapter 5, section 2, note 174).

41 *Die fünfzehnte ordentliche Generalversammlung des Deutschen Metallarbeiter-Verbandes in Jena 1921. Abgehalten vom 12. bis 18. September im Saale des Volkshauses*, Stuttgart, 1921, p. 283. At this point the minutes add the words 'Very good!' On the course of this conference and its significance, see the thorough account by Wentzel 1981, pp. 115–21.

42 Rusch, speaking at a sitting of the MEB on 23 September, said that they had not brought up the question of Moscow or Amsterdam 'because this was simply not possible, in view of the overall situation' (RGASPI 534/4/9). The criticism was also made at this sitting that the Russian metalworkers' union had not tried to send a representative. Hence the only international guests present at this conference were resolute opponents of the communists like Merrheim and Ilg, and they spoke in the same vein. But in view of the strength of the KPD in the union, a Russian trade unionist could hardly have been prevented from addressing the conference with his greetings. See also the evaluation of this conference by Levi's periodical, 'Die Entwicklung des Deutschen Metallarbeiterverbandes', *Unser Weg (Sowjet)*, nos. 11 and 12, October 1921, pp. 296–300 and 330–6. It is even stated there that the KPD fraction at the trade-union conference was in opposition to the KPD leadership, which is certainly wishful thinking, since it did nothing other than present an already agreed line,

about the sharp attacks in KPD publications on the 'yellow trade union leaders' of the Amsterdam international, or about the organisation of fractional activities by the KPD, such as the conference of metalworkers held in March, both points which had been raised by Dißmann and his allies. They very clearly did not want to let themselves be provoked in any way.

With this, the KPD had come a long way toward granting the demand of the opposition for new tactics. The party apparently wanted to cut the ground from beneath the feet of the most consistent expression of the opposition, the KAG, by following its views and ignoring it officially.

Friesland, who had originally been a supporter of 'ultra-left' views, now cautiously attempted to expand the KPD's room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis Moscow.⁴³ At the beginning of September, the KPD sent Wilhelm Pieck and Fritz Heckert to Moscow as its representatives, with the task of persuading the Comintern leadership to stop exerting influence through constant public declarations which remained largely ineffective, and instead to seek a direct link with the party. 'On the question of the Red Trade Union International, we instructed our representatives to point out that the slogan of red international trade unionism should no longer be put in a purely formal and organisational manner but the content of our comrades' trade union activities must be placed in the foreground. We pointed out that the masses are tired of the purely symbolic confrontation between Moscow and Amsterdam, and that we can only gain ground among the masses for communism if any idea that we want to split the trade unions is ruled out in advance as absolutely impossible ...'⁴⁴

This attitude led very quickly to a conflict with Moscow. After Friesland refused to allow the KPD press to print a series of manifestos by the RILU 'which

although some of its members may have had a certain sympathy for the Levi group. For this sympathy to be converted into a new wave of opposition, a spark had to be provided in the shape of the 'Vorwärts revelations' (see below). Moreover, not all communist members of the DMV took part in the opposition. Jacob Walcher, one of the main speakers at the DMV conference, was one who did not. In any case, Friesland later explained that it was 'with the full agreement of the *Zentrale*' that the communist fraction in the DMV 'did not debate the question "Amsterdam or Moscow" but rather examined the actions it was the proletariat's task to undertake' (Reuter 1972, vol. 1, pp. 626–7).

43 The following discussion is based, except where otherwise indicated, on the description given by Friesland himself at the end of December in a pamphlet written as a contribution to the debate within the party, and entitled '*Zur Krise unserer Partei*' (Reuter 1972, vol. 1, pp. 590–615). The account given in the biography by Willy Brandt and Richard Löwenthal also follows this pamphlet (Brandt and Löwenthal 1957).

44 Reuter 1972, vol. 1, p. 591.

were unclouded by any factual knowledge of conditions in Germany', there was a complaint from Lozovsky, followed by a warning letter from Heckert. As Friesland put it later:

Both the Political Bureau and the Trade Union Section rejected most emphatically the opinions expressed in this letter. We informed Comrade Heckert that we had no reason to change the tactics we have so far followed, that these tactics were ensuring that the working masses had confidence in us, and that it would be dangerous to stray from this path. Moreover, since the Amsterdam international was at that very moment issuing appeals to come to the aid of Soviet Russia, and we were able to strengthen our campaign for the support of the people who are starving in Soviet Russia on the basis of Amsterdam's appeals, we considered it a mistake on tactical grounds to adopt a sharper tone towards the Amsterdamers on the trade union question.⁴⁵

There was a further problem. The RILU had long been trying to establish its own publishing house for its German-language publications, since if these were published in Russia they could not reach the people they were addressed to, and the RILU had until then been forced to rely on making agreements with the KPD's publishers. But the KPD *Zentrale* was opposed to the idea because it had had painful experiences with the Comintern's publications.⁴⁶ These objections

45 Reuter 1972, vol. 1, p. 592.

46 This was not a matter of technical problems, such as questions of co-ordination or losses resulting from overlaps with parallel publications, but rather the nature of the publications themselves. The Comintern had issued pamphlets in Germany which the KPD leadership objected to on political grounds. One particular stumbling block, which was repeatedly quoted, was Zinoviev's pamphlet about his activities at the Halle party congress of the USPD (*Zwölf Tage in Deutschland*, Hamburg, 1921) in which the right wing of the USPD, headed by Dißmann, is strongly criticised, and Dißmann himself is described as 'the Noske of the future'. The publication of this pamphlet in Germany was initially prevented by the *Levi Zentrale*. Zinoviev complained about this bitterly at the ECCI session of 22–23 February 1921 (see Goldbach 1973, p. 140). In any case, Dißmann soon found out what Zinoviev had written, and at the DMV conference he quoted a passage from the pamphlet of 'Little Chief Zinoviev' about the 'roughly 100,000 officials' in the German trade unions who were 'the best White Guard of German capital' and 'the irreplaceable watchdogs of the bourgeoisie' (*Die fünfzehnte DMV-Generalversammlung* 1921, p. 204). At a meeting of the MEB on 23 September, Walcher criticised Zinoviev's 'abusive language' (RGASPI 534/4/9), while Friesland described the pamphlet as simply 'shoddy' (Reuter 1972, vol. 1, p. 598).

were put by Walcher at the MEB's meeting on 23 September. The Russian representative replied that since the KPD leadership 'had not been informed about the necessity for such a publishing house ... it was not in a position to state that it was superfluous'.⁴⁷ The RILU started to publish its own literature that autumn, initially by commissioning another publishing house to do the work (this was the Phönix-Verlag).⁴⁸

It was not just in this instance that Friesland had aroused the distrust of the Comintern leadership. His temporising attitude towards Levi and the KAG, which he increasingly regarded as a useful corrective to the errors of the KPD, was also sharply condemned. In the middle of November, to the surprise of the KPD, Heckert and Pieck were sent back to Germany. Their task was to make sure the party distanced itself from the KAG. They were also told that Friesland should be removed from office when an appropriate occasion presented itself.

Thus the atmosphere within the party was already very tense when the revelations made about its role in the March Action by the SPD newspaper *Vorwärts* on 25 November detonated the explosion which brought things to a head. The uneasiness of many members now turned into a fresh wave of opposition, which crystallised around Friesland. What the opposition demanded was the dismissal of those responsible for the March Action, an agreement with the KAG, and in general a 'rightward shift' in the party line. Friesland found powerful support for these demands among the responsible trade-union cadres of the party, including the majority of the trade-union section [*Gewerkschafts-abteilung*].⁴⁹ Three of its four members (Malzahn, Neumann and Hauth) had already expressed their disquiet about the way the party's fractional activity was conducted in the trade unions in mid-November, but after a discussion with the KPD leadership on 19 November, they had announced that the differences had been ironed out. On 28 November, they had a faction meeting with Friesland which re-opened the fight within the KPD leadership.⁵⁰ Now

47 RGASPI 534/4/9.

48 At a meeting of the KPD politbureau on 12 December, Walcher once again stressed the MEB's claim to conduct publishing activities independently on behalf of the RILU, but declared that the MEB was ready 'to collaborate in practical matters'. Until then, however, the KPD's party publishing house had been unaware of the Phönix-Verlag (see Reuter 1972, vol. 1, p. 604). In the course of December, the activities of the various communist publishing houses in Germany began to be co-ordinated (see Goldbeck 1987, p. 12).

49 The former national trade-union centre (*Reichsgewerkschaftszentrale* or RGZ) was given this new name at the party's Jena congress in 1921.

50 Reisberg, vol. 1, p. 281 and vol. 2, p. 742. (See also the 30 November statement by Malzahn,

the question of the RILU also came up, although by and large it was of only marginal significance; even so, the justification for the continued existence of the RILU had now been publicly questioned. In the forefront of the conflict, admittedly, there stood the demands of the opposition which related directly to the organisation and policy of the KPD, and which came to a head in the call for the resignation of the people responsible for the March Action. But there was also a more fundamental background, namely questions about the nature of the 'capitalist crisis' and the situation in Western Europe as a whole, which were occasionally raised but hardly ever discussed. The answers to both of these questions might perhaps make it necessary for socialists to follow a different strategy from the Bolshevik one.

The mood which prevailed at this time among many KPD militants towards the RILU was depicted by Heckert in a letter to Lozovsky. When he returned to Germany in November, he said, he had met with a hostile reception, less for personal reasons than because of the RILU. This hostility toward the RILU was hidden, but when he managed to bring it into the open, a series of complaints were made about its mistakes vis-à-vis the International Trade Secretariats, its behaviour in Italy, and incautious utterances by Lozovsky, among other things. 'I must state quite openly', he added, 'that there is particularly strong resistance to the policies of the RILU in Germany'.⁵¹

On 2 December, the central organ of the KPD publicised these disagreements for the first time. The position it took on the 'significance of the Red Trade Union International' was to defend its existence on the ground of the world-wide failure of the policy 'of active co-operation with the employers' pursued by the reformist trade unions. Even if the RILU was still weak in Germany, since the only union that had joined it was the FAUD-Gelsenkirchen, so that it was unable to offer itself as an organisational alternative, it alone was capable of creating the 'revolutionary united front'.⁵² But it was not just the opposition within the party that had a negative attitude towards the RILU. At the very Politbureau sitting of 12 December that removed Friesland from the party lead-

Neumann and Hauth, which was included by Friesland in his pamphlet, as reprinted in Reuter, vol. 1, pp. 594-6).

51 Heckert to Lozovsky, 13 January 1922 (SAPMO I 2/3/231 and I 2/708/49).

52 The article was unsigned and it was printed in both the morning and evening editions of the paper, which shows the importance attached to it. Some people thought, however, that the article, with its reservation that the RILU was unable to offer itself as an alternative organisation at present, did not convey a sufficiently decisive impression. (See S. Leder, 'Ist die RGI für Deutschland eine organisatorische Frage?', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 1, 7 January 1922).

ership, important representatives of the party majority expressed their doubts about the RILU.⁵³ The new party chairman himself, Ernst Meyer, admitted that 'this question ... urgently requires clarification. I personally would be in favour of making the Profintern a trade union section of the Comintern'. Thalheimer, who admittedly conceded that he was 'not competent in practical trade union matters', quite rightly described 'the struggle against the Profintern' as 'a struggle against the organisational summit, whose foundation is constituted by our communist cells in the trade unions'.⁵⁴

After that it was Heckert who took an authoritative stand against the freshly minted 'gravediggers' of the RILU.⁵⁵ Just a while ago, he said, they had either taken part directly in founding the RILU or helped to draft a trade-union policy for the Comintern. He gave as examples, on the one hand, D'Aragona and the CGL leadership, and on the other, Paul Levi. He mounted a sustained attack on the latter's article in *Unser Weg*.⁵⁶ All this criticism of the RILU, he said, should be set against the background of the defeats suffered by the international trade-union movement, and its recent decline, for which the RILU was being made a 'scapegoat'. But Amsterdam had been a complete washout. If 'proclamations had emerged from Amsterdam in the last few months which breathe a somewhat different spirit', such as the IFTU initiative for famine relief, and Fimmen's suggestion of an international general strike against the employers' offensive, this was because of the pressure from the RILU. But there would be further splits in the IFTU. They would happen in the CGT, and in Poland. The Russians had not been admitted to the ITSS. He would be ready, he said, to make this generous concession: 'If Amsterdam recognises that the path proposed by the RILU's Action Programme is the correct path for the proletariat, the RILU will make peace with Amsterdam'. But the general tenor of his comments made it plain that he regarded such a development as improbable.

53 The minutes of this meeting were published by Friesland in his pamphlet (see Reuter 1972, vol. 1, pp. 601–9).

54 Reuter 1972, vol. 1, pp. 605 and 607. Thalheimer repeated this evaluation in more detail in an extensive multi-part polemic against the KAG in the theoretical organ of the KPD. See the section entitled 'Die Liquidation der Kommunistischen Gewerkschaftsarbeit', *Die Internationale*, no. 4, 15 January 1922, pp. 79–83.

55 The importance attached to this article was shown by its simultaneous publication in three places, with some slight verbal variations: *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 372, 14 December 1921; *Die Internationale*, no. 18–19, 15 December 1921, pp. 638–41; and *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, no. 35, 13 December 1921, pp. 316–17.

56 His main purpose in doing this, he wrote to Lozovsky, was to target the new opposition in the KPD (see below, note 52).

Friesland had now been deprived of his party functions, but he continued to be permitted to speak at party meetings until the ZA had confirmed his removal. When he did speak, at a conference of Berlin functionaries held on 30 December, he held back from discussing the points raised by Heckert, engaging instead in various ambiguous formulations, such as: 'We did not say that the Red Trade Union International should be liquidated, though it is our conviction that the liquidation of that organisation will one day come about, without our members' having taken a position on the issue'.⁵⁷ The opposition's final proclamation at the beginning of January (the 'Declaration of the 28') was only couched in very general terms. They said that they refused to change their 'trade union tactics'. It was implied by this that the RILU had changed its tactics by calling on the Norwegian and Italian trade unions to break with Amsterdam.⁵⁸

It was the trade-union specialist of the opposition, Wilhelm Hauth, who then openly raised the demand for the dissolution of the RILU. He answered Heckert in a long two-part article in *Die Internationale*.⁵⁹ In view of the decline in the workers' movement, and the severe crisis through which it was passing,

57 'Die KPD-Funktionäre Gross-Berlins zur Parteikrise', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 1, 1 January 1922 and no. 2, 2 January 1922. See also Reuter 1972, vol. 1, p. 627. The discussion on the RILU, which appears to have been particularly passionate in Berlin, was then continued at two sittings of the Berlin executive on 13 and 20 January. See 'Der Zentralvorstand von Gross-Berlin zur Frage der RGI', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 37, 22 January 1922. The leader of the party's left wing in Berlin, Ruth Fischer, also voiced her opinion on the matter, in 'Massenpartei oder Sekte', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 49, 29 January 1922.

58 Printed in Reuter 1972, vol. 1, pp. 629–33, here p. 632.

59 W. Hauth, 'Die Frage der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Internationale*, no. 1/2, 1 January 1922, pp. 38–41; no. 7, 5 February 1922, pp. 154–9. (The delay in printing the second half of this article, which had long been ready for the press, was explained in an editorial preface by lack of space in the previous issues, but it probably occurred because they wanted to print a long answer by Heckert, and he was in France at the turn of the year. By the time the second half appeared, Hauth had already been expelled from the party. Heckert's answer, 'Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale und ihr Kritiker Wilhelm Hauth', *Die Internationale*, no. 8, 12 February 1922, pp. 183–6, was essentially a repetition of the arguments in his speech at the ZA sitting of January 1922).

Hauth, who had moved from journalism at the *Rote Fahne* to the *Reichsgewerkschaftszentrale* after the March Action, was initially in favour of founding revolutionary trade unions, and according to Brandler at the first ECCI plenum he continued to take this view until the Heidelberg party congress. (See *Der Kampf der Kommunisten in den Gewerkschaften* 1922, p. 29). According to Heckert's letter to Lozovsky, quoted earlier, a number of signatories of the 'Declaration of the 128', the manifesto issued by the opposition in December, had 'previously made propaganda in the party for all possible experiments in the trade union question'.

he described the phrase 'the leaders are to blame for everything' as 'un-Marxist'. The Italians were right in their endeavour to maintain unity. It was one of the principles of trade unionism, he asserted, to fight against any tendency towards a split. He was able to point to a dilemma arising from this with which communists had been confronted since the foundation of the RILU, even if they did not admit it: 'We cannot see why this tactic' (of avoiding a split in the trade unions) 'applies only to individual organisations and national trade union federations and is not also valid at an international level'. He therefore called for the RILU to be downgraded to a purely 'ideological headquarters for the trade union opposition as a whole'. Its task would be to compel Amsterdam to co-operate with the Russian trade unions. There were already signs of this in the IFTU's declarations in support of Russian economic construction. Moreover, it was Amsterdam's previous sabotage of the Russian trade unions which had ultimately led to the establishment of the RILU. 'The entry of the Russian trade unions into the Amsterdam international would therefore remove one of the reasons for the existence of the RILU'. The other trade unions attached to Moscow would then want to return to the IFTU, with the possible exception of the syndicalists. Hence the question of the RILU's further existence was this: 'Should one decide in favour of a few hundred thousand syndicalists or 31 million socialist workers?'

With his emphasis on the Russian trade unions as the crucial and pivotal point for the RILU, Hauth had raised an issue that had until then played no role in the discussion, even at the international level. In a sense, however, it anticipated considerations which came up in later years, from 1924 onwards. In general, though, it was enough to take a look at the situation in the international trade-union movement to see that the conditions for the restoration of organisational unity were lacking on both sides of the divide. It was exactly at that time, for instance, that the CGT was moving closer to a split.⁶⁰

60 At the conference of Berlin functionaries mentioned earlier, Friesland had suggested that the party was deliberately holding back the correspondence between the RILU and Amsterdam aimed at preventing a split in France (see Reuter 1972, vol. 1, p. 627). Not until 13 January 1922 was it briefly documented in *Die Rote Fahne* (no. 21, 13 January 1922). But it cannot be deduced from this evidence, or from the whole development of the split, that Moscow was the driving force; the opposite was rather the case (see chapter 5, section 2). Heckert travelled to France at the end of 1921. He took part in the closing stages of the conference of the *Comités Syndicalistes Révolutionnaires* and then he attended the party congress of the PCF. His impressions of the 'new CGT' and the role the communist trade unionists played in it were somewhat mixed, as he told Lozovsky in his letter of 13 January 1922. Very few of them seemed as serious as Monatte was. Heckert also explained

The party leadership was able to assert its position at a meeting of the highest representative assembly of the KPD, the Central Commission (ZA), held on 22 and 23 January 1922, and to expel the spokesmen of the opposition. The trade-union question was an important aspect of the discussion. Heckert reported on the subject, defending the RILU's right to exist, and also 'cell tactics'. Hauth replied accusing Heckert of thinking in exclusively organisational terms. His was an isolated voice; all the other speakers supported Heckert. A resolution was adopted upholding Heckert's arguments, and expelling the supporters of the opposition.⁶¹ The KPD leadership could naturally count on Moscow's backing for this step. In fact Moscow made no fewer than three interventions ahead of the ZA sitting: there were letters from the ECCI, from Trotsky, and a third letter signed by Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Radek and Zinoviev.⁶² At this point,

his support for the appeal to Amsterdam in the letter. He added that in a discussion in Berlin, in which he had participated, along with Victor [Vaksov? – R.T.], Rosmer, Walcher, the Comintern representative Guralsky and others, the RILU leadership had been asked to undertake an initiative of precisely the kind made by Lozovsky in his letters to the IFTU, so he assumed that he had been acting in accordance with the suggestion made at this meeting.

- 61 See the report on this sitting of the ZA in *Die Rote Fahne*, nos. 39, 24 January 1922, 41, 25 January (morning), 42, 25 January (evening), and 43, 26 January. See also the more detailed account by Annette Neumann, which is based on the unpublished minutes (Neumann 1986, pp. 76–80). The 'resolution on the trade union question' was printed in *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 4, 28 January 1922. In a commentary he wrote on this resolution ('Finale', *Unser Weg*, no. 3/4, 15 February 1922, pp. 52–9, also printed in Reuter 1972, vol. 1, pp. 646–50), Friesland noted that no one had been surprised at the result of the sitting. On the trade-union question, the ZA had made nothing clear, nor had it actually wanted to. 'The ambiguities of the RILU impede any serious communist work. The German party could confront the RILU. It does not wish to. We ourselves think, of course, that other pressures will very soon make the RILU itself take the initiative' ('Finale', p. 57). The same issue of *Unser Weg* (no. 3/4, 15 February 1922) contains on pp. 71–82 an 'Open Letter to Comrade Paul Levi' from Serrati, in which he thanks him for his support and outlines the position of the Italian Maximalists. In relation to the trade-union question, he says that they had wanted to take control of the Amsterdam international with their tactics, but Moscow wanted to create a 'red trade union organisation' from the ground up, using, as he put it polemically, 'the trade unions of Russia and ... New Zealand'. Moreover, Moscow would now abandon the line of the Second Comintern Congress in France, so as not to spoil its relations with the anarcho-syndicalists. This was to outdo even the practices of the Amsterdam leaders, above all when they were simultaneously asking for their assistance against the famine that was raging (p. 77).
- 62 The letters were printed in *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 21, 13 January 1922, no. 29, 18 January 1922, and no. 37, 22 January 1922.

the IFTU also suddenly weighed in. The nature of the denunciations of the opposition in the ZA resolution, it said, was a confirmation of the view that the RILU was merely a trade-union section of the Comintern, and it quoted passages which demonstrated that the proclaimed united front was diametrically opposed to the behaviour of the communists in a wide variety of countries.⁶³

The line of the party and the Comintern was thus definitively confirmed by the ZA sitting. In order, however, to make a special appeal to the party's trade-union activists, who had been made particularly insecure by these controversies, a conference of communist trade-union functionaries was held a week later, on 30 and 31 January. Numerous practical questions relating directly to trade-union work were the main subject of discussion, but there was a special item of the agenda in which Erich Melcher, a member of the MEB, upheld the need for a red international of trade unions. Only one speaker disagreed with him.⁶⁴

This whole episode led to the loss of a number of important and experienced trade-union cadres, headed by members of what was now the Trade Union Section [*Gewerkschaftsabteilung*] of the party. Some of them, like Richard Müller and Heinrich Malzahn, had taken an active part in the establishment of the RILU. The influence of the KPD in the metalworkers' union suffered particular damage. Forty of the signatories of the 'Declaration of the 128', the opposition's manifesto issued in December 1921, were members of the DMV.⁶⁵ Levi, and after him Friesland, placed their hopes on precisely these radical metalworkers, who had been in a certain sense the striking force of the German revolution and one of the bastions of the USPD. It is therefore not surprising that the recrudescence of intra-party opposition in November 1921 was preceded by attempts to resuscitate the movement of the Revolutionary Shop Stewards in Berlin.⁶⁶ This

63 *Presseberichte des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes*, no. 111, 1922.

64 See the reports in *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 55, 2 February 1922 and *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 5, 4 February 1922. There are no minutes of this meeting preserved in SAPMO. See also Neumann 1986, pp. 81–2.

65 See Wentzel 1981, p. 113, and the list of names in *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 589, 24 December 1921. Some of the signatories later withdrew their names, and remained in the party. This applies, for instance, to Michael Niederkirchner, who was later to be a member of the RILU leadership, and to Theodor Gabbey, the spokesman of the communist printworkers, who was later to join the KPO. Wilhelm Zaisser, the party's representative in the Gelsenkirchen Union, who was much later to be Ulbricht's opponent in the GDR, had also given his signature to the protest originally.

66 See Koch-Baumgarten 1986, pp. 418–20, 427, 431 and 440; and Reisberg 1971, vol. 1, pp. 288–9. See also the comments in Von Oertzen 1976, particularly pp. 89 and 286.

group had been sympathetic to the KAG from the beginning, and when a crisis broke out in the KPD after the '*Vorwärts* Revelations', it became a major pillar of the Friesland opposition. The Berlin local organisation of the DMV financed the printing of the various documents issued by the opposition, for instance. Heckert was obliged to inform Lozovsky that the executive of the Berlin metalworkers' fraction in the KPD was firmly in the hands of opponents of the RILU (though a members' meeting did later vote the Berlin executive out of office).⁶⁷ Over the whole country, too, the KPD's metalworker fractions were in the hands of oppositionists.⁶⁸ The Trade Union Section of the KPD shrank temporarily so that it consisted for a short period just of Heckert and Walcher.⁶⁹ But in the next few months, the KPD was largely able to make good the loss of the mass influence represented by these militant trade unionists, who moved in the course of 1922 along with the rest of the KAG back to social democracy, passing through the intermediate stopping-point of the USPD,⁷⁰ and thus back to 'Amsterdam', as one might say. (In this context, however, it should not be overlooked that by no means did all the important trade-union cadres of the KPD take the path of opposition). In 1922, the party was even able to win a greater amount of trade-union influence than before, thanks to its consistent pursuit of the united front policy, which involved placing economic and social demands at the centre of its agitation in view of the crisis created by the inflation. The party's progress was demonstrated by its showing at the ADGB congress in June 1922, where it provided 90 of the 692 delegates.⁷¹ The confrontation 'Moscow against Amster-

67 See the references in note 51. The fact that the Berlin district organisation of the KPD was controlled by the left wing of the party around Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow certainly also played a role in these developments. They had little patience with long-term trade-union work under the banner of the united front, so there was an immediate clash with the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, who did not want to subordinate themselves to the leadership claims of the KPD as put forward by Ruth Fischer.

68 On 27 January, Erich Melcher, who was also a member of the MEB, took over the leadership of the group of KPD metalworkers (his predecessors were Oskar Rusch and Heinrich Malzahn). See his report to the IPC for the metalworking industry on 10 March 1922 (GARF 5667/5/38/23–41).

69 Heckert said this in his letter to Lozovsky (note 51).

70 'The majority [of the Revolutionary Shop Stewards – R.T.] joined the KPD as part of the left wing of the USPD; but only a minority remained with the party. A remarkable number of former Shop Stewards, among them many leading personalities, ceased to support any party, or joined the SPD again, but placed their chief emphasis on trade union work rather than political activity' (Von Oertzen 1976, p. 89). The Revolutionary Shop Stewards continued to be a noteworthy current in the Berlin DMV until 1923.

71 See, for example, the data given by Neumann 1986, pp. 96–7, but above all the discussion in Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 161–205.

dam' now played at best a secondary role in the arguments between communist and social-democratic trade unionists, as was already becoming apparent in the summer of 1921. Whereas in 1921 there had been a definite division between 'Moscow' and the KPD's trade-union cadres, this gap was now closed as a result of the new approach, which had the support of the RILU and the Comintern leadership, as was shown by the conferences of February and March 1922.⁷²

The crisis that the KPD had passed through did not leave the RILU entirely unaffected. It had had a tangential impact on the RILU apparatus in Berlin, which was centred on the MEB, although the political repercussions were not particularly profound. The apparatus had to be reorganised after the March Action. Walcher was included as a new member.⁷³ But Oskar Rusch, who remained a member (in addition to Max Ziese), continued to be regarded as a 'Levite'.⁷⁴ After the Executive Bureau of the RILU had postponed a decision on him on 22 September owing to inadequate information, he himself drew the appropriate conclusion in October, resigning from the KPD together with 16 other members of the apparatus, when a KAG meeting in Berlin was broken up in spectacular fashion by KPD party functionaries.⁷⁵ Richard Müller, who was a member of the Central Council of the RILU, welcomed the removal of Rusch from this body in a letter of 20 October to the MEB,⁷⁶ although in January 1922 he went on to declare his solidarity with the Friesland opposition.⁷⁷ Similar

72 Meanwhile, the justification for the RILU's further existence was no longer a subject of discussion. This was shown at the national conference of communist trade unionists held on 7–8 October 1922, where a generally positive verdict was delivered on the state of communist influence in the trade unions (see the minutes, in SAPMO 2/708/2).

73 This is stated without further details in a letter of 17 June from Berlin to the RILU leadership (RGASPI 534/8/2).

74 This is the description of him given in a report of 1 June 1921 on the activities of the MEB (RGASPI 534/4/2). See also the reply to criticisms of a 'Levite' type made by Rusch of the party's trade-union policy, in a letter of 11 June 1921 from Moscow to the MEB (SAPMO I 2/798/46). Rusch bluntly declared at a sitting of the MEB on 23 September that they had an 'incorrect attitude' toward the trade-union question. It was more important to look at practical questions (RGASPI 534/4/9).

75 See 'Aus der Berliner Organisation', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 476, 18 October 1921, and Koch-Baumgarten 1986, p. 415.

76 SAPMO 2/708/47. He was replaced by Erich Melcher, who also came from the DMV. See Circular no. 4 by the MEB, 6 November 1922 (RGASPI 534/4/10) and note 70.

77 Rusch returned to the USPD via the KAG, but did not go along with the majority decision by the USPD to rejoin the SPD, preferring to remain in the 'USPD Remnant'. Müller, on the other hand, did not join the KAG in January 1922 because the outlines of its merger with the USPD were already beginning to take shape. Instead he withdrew completely

organisational consequences resulted for the metalworkers' IPC, owing to the strong representation of metalworkers in the opposition.

But, all in all, these overlapping Levi and Friesland crises remained a mere episode for the RILU. In view of the successful expansion in KPD trade-union work from the beginning of 1922, it is certainly a mistake to see these crises as a turning-point, and the start of the collapse of the RILU, on the basis that they marked the failure of the attempt to create an influential communist trade-union movement in Germany.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the controversy with the opposition in Germany in 1921 has some significance for the development of the RILU, even if it had no lasting consequences, and that is why it cannot simply be left out of account in any treatment of the RILU's history.⁷⁹

What gave all the arguments in Italy, Norway and Germany about the existence of the RILU a special significance was the fact that the beginning of 1922 saw the emergence of an international dimension to these 'attempts at liquidation'. Even though the turn the Comintern leadership took in December 1921 with the acceptance of the united front tactic was nothing other than a consistent development of the decisions of the Third Comintern Congress, and thus also of the line of the KPD congress held in Jena just after the Comintern congress,⁸⁰ it was feared that it would have an adverse impact on the RILU. The call for co-operation with the social-democratic parties and trade unions appeared to raise the question of whether it would not be logical to dissolve the RILU. This would, however, involve a decision by the Bolshevik leadership.⁸¹ But already at the 11th Conference of the RCP (b) (19–22 December 1921), which was the first meeting to approve the united front policy, before the Comintern leadership officially proclaimed it at the end of the year, it was made plain that the united front had nothing to do with the position of the RILU. In Zinoviev's words:

from political life. Heinrich Malzahn pursued yet a third course. Along with three other KAG deputies, he returned to the KPD instead of the SPD, though he later left the KPD definitively, while remaining active in the DMV.

78 This is the conclusion drawn by Swain (1987, pp. 65–72).

79 Apart from Swain's relatively thorough presentation, the events are also treated briefly by Resis (1964, pp. 245–6), while they are completely absent from the Soviet literature on the subject.

80 See chapter 5, section 3, on the whole complex of the turn towards a united front policy.

81 Resis (1964, p. 246) makes a very far-fetched suggestion that the dissolution of the RILU was seriously considered by some of the Bolsheviks. He bases this idea on his discovery that Lozovsky issued a further denial of this intention in March, after the 11th Party Conference had taken place. But numerous actions by the RILU leadership and by the Bolshevik politbureau, which we shall detail later, such as their discussions over whether to replace Lozovsky by someone else, are proof that they had precisely the opposite in mind.

'The RILU is necessary for us, we need an international centre of crystallisation which can serve as a pole of attraction for all the revolutionary strata which are gradually freeing themselves from the infamous influence of the Amsterdam international'. He went on to draw parallels with aspects of Bolshevik history, adding that such a centre should also approach the masses under the slogan of the united front. Lozovsky spoke after Zinoviev, launching an attack specifically on the 'liquidationist' Levi group.⁸²

The position adopted by the 11th Party Conference was confirmed at the international level soon afterwards, at the second session of the Central Council of the RILU and at the first Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI, held from 24 February to 2 March 1922. At the Central Council, the united front tactic was the central point of the proceedings, and it was made clear that this tactic 'was by no means to be understood as an abandonment by the red trade unions of their principles, their programme or their tactics'.⁸³ The only significance of interventions like those of Levi and Friesland was that they temporarily 'held back the movement in other countries',⁸⁴ a comment which could be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the problems in Italy and Norway. According to the KPD theorist Thalheimer, writing in a commentary on the Enlarged ECCI Plenum, 'it became apparent that the liquidationist questions raised about the RILU in various countries were of no significance at all. A fundamental debate on the question of the RILU's future existence turned out to be absolutely unnecessary'.⁸⁵

82 *Vserossiiskaia konferentsiia RKP (b) (19–22 dekabria 1921g.)*, stenograficheskii otchet, Rostov, 1922, pp. 164 and 170–3. Moreover, Lozovsky linked his attack on Levi with a critique of the failure of the KPD's delegates to defend the RILU at the DMV conference, as indicated earlier.

83 That is how the Central Council put it in its resolution entitled 'The Offensive of Capital and the United Front', printed in the first special supplement of *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, 25 March 1922. See also the speeches by Lozovsky and Brandler on the trade-union question at the Enlarged ECCI Plenum, the resolution on this in *Der Kampf der Kommunisten* 1922, pp. 17, 29 and 35–6, and the commentary published by Brandler on the eve of these two Moscow conferences (Heinrich Brandler, 'Die Entwicklungsbedingungen der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 20, 1922, pp. 22–34, here p. 31). See chapter 5, section 3 on the proceedings of the Central Council session and on the trade-union discussion at the Enlarged ECCI Plenum.

84 This is a comment by Lozovsky reproduced in the conference report which was printed as 'Zweite Plenarsitzung des Rates der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale', in *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 108, 4 March 1922.

85 August Thalheimer, 'Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse der erweiterten Exekutiv-Sitzung der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Die Internationale*, no. 15, 2 April 1922, pp. 331–3, here p. 332.

2 The Syndicalists between Moscow and Berlin

The syndicalist organisations gave their first reactions to the proceedings of the RILU congress while it was still in session. 19 CSR leaders published a protest declaration in *l'Humanité*, on the basis of agency reports about the resolution passed at Moscow on the 'organisational relationship' between the RILU and the Comintern. The Central Committee of the CSRs gave its support to the protest at a sitting on 16 July. The resolution of the RILU congress, it said, contradicted the spirit of trade-union autonomy which revolutionary syndicalists stood for. By signing the resolution, Tommasi and Godonnèche had acted against their mandate. A new congress would have to be called to revise the position that had been taken.⁸⁶

This movement of protest was not just the work of the 'pure syndicalists' who were associated with the 'pact'. Future trade-union supporters of the PCF like Monmousseau, Semard and Racamond, and even such a close sympathiser with Bolshevism as Monatte, signed the declaration printed in *l'Humanité*. Monatte's signature incurred a bitter reproach from Rosmer, who said he had been completely misinformed and should first have waited for a report instead of riding forward 'at a gallop' to protest.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, there was much at stake for the whole group of CSRs. This resolution by the RILU congress, coming as it did on the eve of the CGT congress in Lille (25–30 July 1921) was very useful to the CGT majority around Jouhaux, Dumoulin and Merrheim, because it enabled them to show that the CSRs were acting against the traditions of the French trade-union movement by conceding this subordination to a political party. This argument put the whole CSR movement on the defensive, and it explains its leaders' unanimous protest against the Moscow resolution.⁸⁸

Only two weeks after Lille, the CSR leaders repeated their protest by making a declaration which sharply rejected the 2 August manifesto of the syndicalist delegates to the RILU congress, also signed by Sirolle, that the RILU was now a reality and that the syndicalists should co-operate with it (see chapter 4, section 5). Nevertheless, this declaration of 19 August also confirmed that in

86 Both protests are recorded in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 116, 22 July 1921.

87 See Rosmer's letter in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 301–2.

88 On this point, see Jean Charles, 'Les débuts de l'Internationale Syndicale Rouge et le mouvement ouvrier français (1920–1923). Première partie', *Cahiers d'histoire de l'Institut Maurice Thorez*, nos. 25–26, 1978, pp. 161–99, here pp. 188–90, and Thorpe 1989, pp. 204–7. See below for an account of the Lille congress of the CGT.

principle they wished to retain their membership of the RILU. At its next congress, however, the RILU would have to accept trade-union autonomy, they continued.⁸⁹

These events were the opening shots in a severe conflict of views which would split the French syndicalists in the next few months. They were now obliged to define their relationship to an existing international organisation in a concrete fashion. There was a special situation in France, because the CGT was affiliated to the IFTU, and two separate conflicts thus developed, between the revolutionary and reformist wings on the one hand, and between different factions within the revolutionary current on the other. Outside France, the conflicts in which the independent syndicalist organisations were engaged were simpler. In those cases, there was an unambiguous confrontation between those who advocated joining the RILU and those who were in favour of founding a syndicalist international which would be independent of Moscow. Now that the discussions took place within the national organisations, however, the united opposition front, which the syndicalists had sworn to uphold in numerous declarations when in Moscow, broke apart once again. The manifesto of 2 August, by which one section of syndicalists came out in support of the RILU, was one demonstration of that fact.

This was seen by the FAUD as a confirmation of its approach. It had been the only significant syndicalist organisation not to be represented at the Moscow congress. When it held its 13th Congress, in October 1921, it placed greater stress on its anarcho-syndicalist character. Simultaneous membership in political parties was now no longer permitted (this provision was aimed above all at the KPD). A number of syndicalist delegates had stopped off in Berlin on their return from the Moscow congress, and the idea of a purely syndicalist international now crystallised out among some of them. As a result, discussions were held on the fringes of the FAUD congress with international guests, such as Lansink of the NAS, who also represented the International Syndicalist Bureau which had been set up at the Berlin conference, Casperson of the SAC and Williams of the IWW. They proposed that an international syndicalist congress should be convened to found a separate syndicalist international, since the RILU had been a failure. The FAUD congress associated itself with this initiative.⁹⁰ This was the first step on the road that would lead to the foundation of the International Working Men's Association (IWMA) at the end of 1922.

89 'Les syndicats français et la Résolution de Moscou', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 120, 19 August 1921.

90 'Der 13. Kongress der F.A.U.D.', *Der Syndikalist*, nos. 41 and 42, 1921; 'Die Beschlüsse des 13. Kongresses der F.A.U.D.', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 44, 1921. Communist reactions: G. Smolyansky, 'Die Kindereien der deutschen Syndikalismus', and F. 'Der deutsche Syndikalist'

There had been general agreement in the FAUD even before the RILU congress about the need to turn away from Moscow (leaving aside the special case of the *Schiffahrtsbund*, which will be examined later). Other syndicalist organisations had sent delegates to Moscow in 1921, who now delivered their reports, and their attitude to the question was naturally different from that of the FAUD.

A foretaste of the mood to be expected in the CNT was given by a declaration by CNT members living in France in which they disavowed the actions of their delegation in Moscow, along the same lines as the declaration of the 19 CSR leaders.⁹¹ In Spain itself, the anarchist wing of the CNT created a tribune for itself in the shape of the journal *Nueva senda*, published in Madrid, which became the most important organ of the opponents of the RILU within the movement. But their offensive initially stalled, because the delegates were slow to arrive back. A plenum held in Madrid on 14 and 15 August, at which the anarchist organisation was relatively broadly represented, with 34 delegates, avoided making a decision on whether to remain affiliated to the RILU, contenting itself with confirming the goal of 'libertarian communism' which had been proclaimed at the CNT congress of 1919.⁹²

It turned out to be difficult for the CNT delegates to get back to Spain. Arlandis remained in Moscow, collaborating in the work of the Executive Bureau until the end of October, while at the end of August and the beginning of September, the other members of the delegation split up into a number of small groups. Nin had been entrusted with a mission to Berlin, to help to set up the MEB, after which he returned to Moscow (see chapter 5, section 3). The others started by making the acquaintance of the inside of German prisons, as 'suspicious foreigners', after which they were rapidly deported from the country. Once they arrived in Spain, only Maurín was able to avoid immediate arrest. He was therefore the only person who could make a report on the RILU congress to the next plenum of the CNT. In the absence of Nin, he also took over his position as secretary of the National Committee.⁹³

kongress', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, 15 November 1921. See also Thorpe 1989, pp. 201 and 306–7.

91 The CNT declaration was printed in *Le Libéraire* and *La Vie Ouvrière*, and republished in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 32, 1921. At a discussion involving the newly-found RILU Executive Bureau and those French delegates who had remained in Moscow, Lozovsky and Arlandis complained bitterly that it was precisely *La Vie Ouvrière* which published this declaration, thereby giving it an unjustifiably authoritative character, without waiting for more precise information (*Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 312–13).

92 Meaker 1974, pp. 417–21; Bar 1981, pp. 616–18.

93 Ibid.

The plenum took place in the middle of October in Barcelona, and most of the regional federations were present. It listened to Maurín's report and decided that it would first await the result of the discussions in the organisation before making a final decision. After all, the other delegates who had not yet been able to be present must be given the opportunity to put their point of view. In view of the strong push by the anarchists, this already counted as a victory for the communist-sindicalist wing. It was also a victory that the plenum decisively rejected the anarchist claim that the delegation to Moscow had been put together 'illegally'. The rejection of a proposal by the Federation of the North to transfer the headquarters of the National Committee to Bilbao (in other words to remove the group around Maurín from the leadership) appeared to crown this victory over the anarchist current.⁹⁴ A plenum held in Catalonia at the end of November confirmed the leading position of the communist-sindicalist tendency around Maurín.⁹⁵ The CNT leadership was obliged to report to Moscow that the decision to participate in the RILU had been contested by a part of the organisation. But it had no doubt about the ultimate result of the discussion and, although Arlandis was still in prison in Berlin, it expressed the hope that it would soon be able once again to send a representative onto the Executive Bureau. When the latter organisation held its next meeting, on 16 December, it expressed its pleasure at receiving this message.⁹⁶

94 Bar 1981, pp. 618–20; 'In der nationalen Arbeitskonföderation', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, 15 December 1921, pp. 610–12; the resolution is printed in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 130, 28 October 1921. The document presented by the CNT of Valencia and printed in *Le Libéraire*, 3–10 March 1922 is a typical example of the charges made by the anarchists against the 'illegal' delegation. See also the reply by Arlandis in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 150, 17 March 1922. The report of the CNT delegation was published only in the papers issued in Lérida by the pro-RILU tendency, and then in Valencia in the summer of 1922, but it was not published in the official CNT press. Shortly before the Saragossa Conference it was printed again in an edition with a small print-run. (See the details in *Lucha social*, no. 112, 27 May 1922, and *Acción sindicalista*, no. 10, August 1922).

95 'In der Katalonischen Bezirks-Arbeitskonföderation', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 11, 31 December 1922, p. 45.

96 See the correspondence between the CNT and the Executive Bureau in *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 1/2, January–February 1922, and also in RGASPI 534/3/9/207. Since Arlandis had been criticised in the CNT, that organisation would in principle have liked to recall him from the Executive Bureau. However, since it was unable to find a replacement, it decided to leave him there, notwithstanding the problem that he was at the time under arrest in Berlin.

Even so, the anarchists now intensified their propaganda, and soon Leval was able to present his opposing report on the RILU congress.⁹⁷ The opponents of the RILU were able to achieve much greater success at the end of the year with the publication of Pestaña's report on his 1920 trip in *Nueva senda*.⁹⁸ He did not hold back in this report from strong attacks on the RILU, and he brought to bear against that organisation the whole of his prestige as one of the most prominent leaders of the CNT. It was, however, the arrest of Maurín in February 1922 that had the most adverse consequences for the RILU. He was replaced by Joan Peiró, a veteran anarchist, and a new National Committee was also elected. In its very first manifesto it defined its character as 'resolutely anarchist'. A further declaration condemned the communists' new united front policy, which the RILU was also conducting, of course.⁹⁹

The change in the CNT leadership imposed by external events went hand in hand with a sharp change in the whole social and political situation of the country. After the CNT had suffered over a year of bloody persecution and a big loss of militants, above all in its Catalonian stronghold, the revolutionary optimism of 1919 was replaced by a mood of sober anticipation. At the beginning of April 1922, though the CNT itself remained illegal, the new Spanish

97 He did this in the anarchist newspaper published in Alcoy, *Redención* (see Paniagua 1980, p. 82). In his memoirs, Leval again gave a detailed account of his experiences in Moscow in 1921. Only two relevant sections of this work have been published so far. See the text mentioned in chapter 4, section 4, note 96, and 'Les anarchistes en prison', in *Ni Dieu ni Maître. Anthologie de l'anarchisme*, vol. 4, Paris, 1970, pp. 110–21. Leval had already made his rejection of the RILU clear at the end of January in a statement which was published in *Le Libertaire*, 17–24 February 1922. Nin replied in *La Vie Ouvrière* no. 151, 24 March 1922, by confronting him with a long extract from a report he sent from Moscow to Spain about the congress in the middle of August 1921. In this he had expressed his solidarity with the other CNT delegates, rejected the attacks on the congress and, despite all his criticism of the resolutions, demanded unconditional membership of the RILU. Even though they had been in the minority, he said, they would have to strive to achieve changes at the next congress. This declaration by Leval was perhaps made because of his wish to stay longer in Russia. But Lozovsky rejected this suggestion, telling him that it was his duty as a delegate to return home and inform people there. Apart from that, he didn't know any Russian. If he really wanted to be useful to the revolution, he should go to France or Spain and fight the bourgeoisie there. (See *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, p. 339). Leval received support from a number of members of the CNT who had travelled to Russia on their own account, without an official mandate from the organisation, such as, for example, León Xifort, whom we mentioned earlier (see Paniagua 1980, p. 83).

98 Bar 1981, pp. 569 and 620.

99 Bar 1981, pp. 569–60, 609–10 and 620.

government of Antonio Maura restored some constitutional guarantees. This made possible the release of many prisoners and the return of the exiles. 'The committees of the CNT and the CRT [the Catalan regional organisation of the CNT] were again filled up with the old activists of the *Confederación*, and the communist-syndicalists were increasingly pushed out'.¹⁰⁰

The leadership of the CNT had thus slipped out of the hands of the supporters of the RILU, and they were never able to recover it. The conference of the CNT held at Saragossa in mid-June brought no change in this situation. The central items under discussion were twofold: the CNT's attitude to the new political situation, and the movement's international orientation. Arlandis was the only person present who had been a delegate at the RILU founding congress, and he defended the position it had adopted in Moscow. Leval's opposing report was read out in his absence. It was without doubt the speech made by Pestaña that made the greatest impression, however. He now took a decisive stand against the Comintern and its 'economic international', basing himself on his experience during the 1920 discussions. The vast majority of the delegates at the conference were united in the view that there was a yawning abyss between the RILU and the CNT. The CNT had joined the former organisation, as well as the Comintern, more because it sympathised with the revolution than because it agreed with Bolshevik principles. Nevertheless, since its adherence had been decided at the 1919 congress, and could not therefore simply be reversed by a conference vote, it was resolved simply to cease all relations, but to leave a definitive decision to the individual trade-union organisations. But there was no doubt about the mood of the grassroots. At the same time, the conference agreed to support the decision made at Düsseldorf to try to form a separate syndicalist international, and to strive for closer co-operation with the syndicalists of the neighbouring countries of France and Portugal and also those in Latin America (above all Argentina).¹⁰¹

The attitude adopted by the CNT to the situation in Spain was of course much more momentous than this resolution on international links. It now defined itself as unambiguously political, despite confirming its opposition

100 Meaker 1974, p. 440. See also the Open Letter issued on 20 May by the Executive Bureau after lengthy discussions, in which the RILU took up a position on the changed situation, in particular recommending a united front between the CNT and the revolutionary workers of the UGT: 'An die Arbeiter Spaniens', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5/6, May/June 1922, pp. 400–3; RGASPI 534/3/23/108, 114–15 and 126.

101 Meaker 1974, pp. 438–42 and Bar 1981, pp. 620–8. The resolution is printed in *Le Libéraire*, 23–30 June 1922. For a defence of the decision, see L. Xifort, 'Autour de la Conférence de Saragosse', *Le Libéraire*, 28 July to 6 August 1922.

to participation in elections. This decision represented a victory of the more syndicalist-inclined elements over the anarchists (whereas the two currents had remained in alliance over international matters). In addition to a number of smaller points, the CNT also decided to introduce a system of paid officials. In the eyes of many observers, this conference opened the way to greater moderation, but the basis for this was almost immediately snatched away by a renewed worsening of the situation in Spain followed by the establishment of a dictatorship under Primo de Rivera.¹⁰²

In any case, the CNT was now irretrievably lost to the RILU. The Executive Bureau sent a long Open Letter to it after the Saragossa conference, in which it said that there was no room for two revolutionary trade-union internationals, and that the CNT should send representatives to Moscow to discuss all their differences of opinion one more time in order to avoid a definitive break. It was no use.¹⁰³ The appeal was ignored. The RILU's supporters, led by members of the former delegation to the RILU founding congress, were now obliged to organise as a separate grouping, forming a minority within the Confederation. This meant that their situation was now in principle not very different from that of the communist fraction in the socialist trade-union confederation, the UGT (*Unión General de Trabajadores*),¹⁰⁴ whereas previously it had long been hoped that a CNT affiliated to the RILU would be able to draw over the communist current from the UGT, and it had already been decided in the summer of 1922 to establish the structure of a joint organisation for this purpose.¹⁰⁵ In December 1922, a conference in Bilbao agreed to set up some committees which would bring together the pro-RILU currents in both trade-union confederations, the

102 Bar 1981, pp. 594–606 and Meaker 1974, pp. 442–6.

103 See Andreo [sic! – R.T.] Nin, 'Die R.G.I. und die Nationale Arbeitskonföderation (Die Entschliessung der Konferenz in Saragossa)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, July 1922, pp. 455–7, and 'An die Mitglieder der Nationalen Arbeits-Konföderation (C.N.T.)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, August 1922, pp. 535–9.

104 A congress of the UGT met in November 1922. The communist delegates represented only a small minority (24 out of roughly 160). The UGT congress was characterised by a tense atmosphere from the start, because the socialists did not hide their intention of pushing the communists to the wall. The tension exploded when Oudegeest and Jouhaux were about to deliver their greetings on behalf of the IFTU. The stewards were brought into action against communist hecklers in the spectators' gallery. A shot was fired by someone in the crowd – it proved impossible to establish who was responsible for this – and one of the stewards was killed. After a pause during which the sitting was suspended, all trade-union groups which had previously given their support to the RILU were expelled (Meaker 1974, pp. 452–5).

105 RGASPI 534/3/23/159.

CNT and the UGT. These were called *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios*, clearly in homage to the already existing French CSRs. The main stress lay on the CNT, however, as was shown by the fact that the new organ of the committees, the weekly *La Batalla*, was published in Barcelona under the editorship of Maurín.¹⁰⁶

In the USI, too, the leading supporters of remaining in the RILU were the former delegates to the Moscow congress, Mari and Vecchi.¹⁰⁷ They presented their arguments at the sittings of the USI's General Council on 5 and 6 October 1922. They immediately met with strong opposition, but the demand for an immediate break with the RILU also received no more than minority support. The USI leadership, around Borghi, acquiesced in continuing membership, for the present, but it attached demands to this, as the French had done. It wanted a new RILU congress to meet soon, outside Russia, and it wanted the 'organic link' with the Comintern to be removed from the statutes. The USI also abandoned its claim to take the seventh place in the Executive Bureau, which Mari and Vecchi had insisted on so vehemently in Moscow.¹⁰⁸ That body reacted by

106 On the *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios*, see Pelai Pagès, *Historia del Partido Comunista de España (Desde su fundación en abril de 1920 hasta el final de la Dictadura de primo de Rivera, enero de 1930)*, Barcelone, 1978, pp. 53–88 and Andrew Durgan, *BOC 1930–1936. El Bloque Obrero y Campesino*, Barcelone, 1996, pp. 17–36. The establishment of the Spanish CSRs took place in a situation of decline for the whole workers' movement there. Moreover, the UGT had now completed its separation from the communists, and in the CNT the syndicalist-anarchist alliance had successfully marginalised the pro-RILU forces, even though the conflict between the two partners soon broke out again, mainly because of terrorist acts committed by the anarchists. Meanwhile the decline of the CNT continued. In this situation, a proposed visit to Moscow in the spring of 1923 by Salvador Seguí, the leading personality in the CNT and the spokesman for the syndicalist tendency, might have been able to start a regrouping of forces. Lozovsky and Nin had long been trying to arrange this, and Seguí seems to have agreed to come. But in April 1923, he was murdered. The CSRs actually succeeded in the course of 1923 in winning the leadership of some important Barcelona trade unions, but it was too late. In September 1923, the military, led by General Primo de Rivera, mounted a successful coup. This opened a period of reaction, in which the CNT was severely damaged. The situation of illegality in turn strengthened the anarchists. This led the CSRs in Catalonia to change their line of approach. Maurín, who had headed the CSR delegation to the third RILU congress in July 1924, led them into the PCE in the autumn of that year. They set up a Catalan Federation of the PCE, which had previously been unrepresented in the region.

107 The discussion that follows is based chiefly on the thorough presentation given by Antonioli (pp. 120–46).

108 The USI resolution is printed in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 49, 1921, and in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 131, 4 November 1921. In the next issue of the latter journal, the resolution was sharply criticised

declaring that it had absolutely nothing against the USI's demands, and they could be conveyed to the next meeting of the Central Council of the RILU, but it added a condition of its own, knowing full well that this would completely settle the matter of the meeting-place in advance. There must be a guarantee, said the Executive Bureau, that the next RILU congress could actually take place outside Russia without let or hindrance.¹⁰⁹

The confrontation within the USI came to the surface in the next few weeks. After the General Council had met, the USI's press organ published the report given by Mari and Vecchi about the Moscow congress; then, in the next issue, it also published Borghi's report on his journey to Moscow the previous year (it had not been possible to publish this earlier because he was held in prison from the autumn of 1920 to the summer of 1921).¹¹⁰ The report was very critical, and it attacked the ITUC as a mere satellite of the Comintern. An additional element entered the picture in the following weeks because of the negotiations the representative of the RILU was conducting in Italy to bring about trade-union unity. He organised various meetings, some with the USI and the communist trade-union fraction in the CGL, and some 'at the summit' involving the USI, the CGL and the autonomous trade unions. They were all unsuccessful. It was the CGL that had placed the biggest obstacles in the way. But the USI too opposed any connection with the communist trade-union fraction.¹¹¹ This failure was followed by sharp attacks in the communist press, from Gramsci among others, which worsened the atmosphere still further.

Borghi, who had resigned from the secretariat of the USI for internal organisational reasons (his resignation was announced at the October meeting of the USI General Council), went onto the offensive against the RILU with a series of public lectures on his Russian experiences. The supporters of the RILU replied by issuing their own newspaper from the beginning of December, under the title *L'Internazionale*, and by holding a conference in Parma on 29 January 1922, at which they constituted themselves as the *Frazione sindacalista rivoluzion-*

by Rosmer. He contrasted it with the 'constructive attitude' of the CNT, but, as we know, this also did not last very long.

109 RGASPI 534/3/9/173-4 and 'Die Resolution des Vollzugsbüros der R.G.I. über die Lage in Italien', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, 15 November 1921, pp. 84-5.

110 See chapter 3, section 6, note 2.

111 For the attitude of the CGL to the negotiations, see the preceding section. One encumbrance to these negotiations was that Vecchi and Mari had signed an agreement in Moscow with the PCI on co-ordinating endeavours to bring about trade-union unity. They were now reproached with having signed without authorisation. The text of the agreement is printed in *Sempre!*, 1923, pp. 138-40 and Borghi 1964, pp. 174-5.

aria (FSR). Looking forward to the impending congress of the USI, the FSR proclaimed its support for the USI's continued membership in the RILU and the establishment of trade-union unity.¹¹²

The congress of the USI met at Rome in the middle of March. It received yet another urgent appeal from the RILU.¹¹³ Right at the start of the congress, the atmosphere was worsened by arguments over the distribution of mandates.¹¹⁴ Borghi made a frontal attack on the defenders of the RILU, referring to his own experience in Moscow. In this situation the FSR tried a tactical approach, which did not in fact achieve anything. The motion to remain in the RILU without making any conditions was put forward by a delegate who did not belong directly to the FSR, but even so it was only FSR members who voted for it. Vecchi suggested instead a temporary suspension of membership in the RILU, in order to make sure, together with the CGTU and the other syndicalist organisations, that the RILU would guarantee trade-union autonomy. This position was plainly aimed at securing a compromise. The anarchist wing also showed tactical skill in not demanding immediate withdrawal, but its motion required such high hurdles to be overcome that that would have been its practical outcome. According to the anarchist motion, the RILU should not engage in any joint work with the Comintern, all member unions which belonged to the IFTU should be expelled – which meant that the communists would have to leave all IFTU-affiliated organisations – and the seat of the Executive Bureau should be moved to Western Europe. There was a big majority for this position. It was then logical to reject in addition the demand for a united front and a merger of trade unions, which Vecchi had also proposed.¹¹⁵

The RILU sent yet another Open Letter, but it did not help.¹¹⁶ The breach was complete. In the months that followed, the USI leadership took part in

112 'Die revolutionäre Differenzierung im Syndikalistischen Bund', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, p. 184.

113 'Brief an den Kongress des Syndikalistischen Verbandes Italiens', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, pp. 240–1.

114 The FSR raised the criticism that weak local associations were represented out of all proportion to their strength. They had been weakened by the Fascist terror; they mainly supported the leadership around Borghi, and now they were subject to a further wave of persecution.

115 *La Vie Ouvrière* reported in detail on this congress, in nos. 150, 17 March 1922 to 152, 31 March 1922. See also A.N. 'Der Kongress des Verbandes Italienischer Syndikalist', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 272–5, and 'Der Kongress der italienischen Syndikalist', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 13, 1922.

116 'Offener Brief an die Mitglieder der Syndikalistischen Union Italiens', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 320–2.

the creation of a separate syndicalist international. At the same time, the situation in Italy worsened dramatically. The USI's room for manoeuvre was progressively restricted by Fascism, so that it could hardly engage in any public activity, although it was not officially dissolved until the beginning of 1925. By then, the current within the USI which supported remaining in the RILU had long since completed its attachment to the PCI.

The SAC was one of the smaller syndicalist organisations of Europe. Since the Berlin conference it had been regarded in Moscow as a close ally of the FAUD, although it had taken part in the congress that founded the RILU. Unlike the organisations of other countries, however, it immediately ceased all involvement with it. The RILU sent an appeal to the SAC at the end of 1921, telling it not to wander into 'sectarian byways'. This was sent back by the SAC leadership by return of post. In the summer of 1922, it held a vote among its members. 4,110 of them voted against joining the RILU, and only 176 voted in favour. Although the overwhelming majority of the 35,000 members did not vote, this result still expressed the prevailing mood, as the SAC congress confirmed at the beginning of September. The supporters of the RILU were no more than a tiny minority in Sweden, and they were based not in the SAC but in the national trade-union centre affiliated with the IFTU.¹¹⁷

The discussion in the NAS developed somewhat differently. Its delegation at the RILU congress belonged to the part of the syndicalist movement which wanted to co-operate with the Bolsheviks in the RILU. It had not possessed a mandate allowing it to affiliate there and then, but it recommended this action after returning to the Netherlands. The question of affiliation was supposed to be presented to an extraordinary congress of the NAS, called for March 1922. In the meantime, however, the NAS had already sent a delegation to the Central Council of the RILU, which met at the end of January (it had also been represented at the FAUD congress of October 1921). The attitude of the NAS delegation at the Central Council showed that the group was actually divided over the issue: two of its three members (Bouwman and Schenk) declared their support for the RILU, the third (Lansink) announced his opposition.¹¹⁸

117 'Brief an die schwedischen Syndikalistin', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 11, 31 December 1921, pp. 67–70; E. Andersson, 'Die schwedischen Syndikalistin und die R.G.I.', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, march 1922, pp. 200–3; *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 39–41; and Victor Andersson, 'La Centrale Syndicale de Suède se prononce pour Berlin', *Le Libéraire*, 15–22 September 1922. See also Thorpe 1989, pp. 209–10.

118 *Jaarsverslagen over 1920 en 1921 van het Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat in Nederland* 1922, pp. 225–6, and *Rapport delegatie N.A.S. van de zittingen van den Centralen Raad der Roode*

The NAS congress met on 25 and 26 March 1922. Three positions were put forward: immediate affiliation; affiliation after a decision by the RILU to abandon its 'organic link' with the Comintern and its support for 'cell-building' (in other words its orientation towards fractional activity within the IFTU); and finally, rejection, on the grounds that the RILU's basis was not compatible with the Berlin conference decisions. A new international should then be set up on the basis of the Berlin conference decisions, and if the RILU was prepared to go on record in support of the independence of the revolutionary trade-union movement, it could merge with the new international. Only the first two positions were put to the vote. The second position – affiliation subject to the above-mentioned conditions – was accepted by the congress. All three positions were then put to the membership in a referendum. None of them gained an absolute majority, and a second round was held, with the choice now reduced to unconditional affiliation or rejection of affiliation. Approximately a third of the union's members voted in this round. 5,826 opposed affiliation, while 4,458 supported it.¹¹⁹

The NAS refused to take part in the conference of June 1922 which was intended to prepare for the foundation of the syndicalist international (the IWMA), on the basis that its referenda had not yet been completed (see below). It now turned out that it was split down the middle. Polemics between the opposing wings of the union intensified, and the resolution adopted by the NAS congress was given varying interpretations. Meanwhile, preparations for the founding of the IWMA began to be made. Lansink participated actively, with a mandate from the NAS. But before the founding congress of the syndicalist international could meet (this was at the end of December 1922), the second RILU congress, which was held in November 1922, changed its original statute, and made a concession to the syndicalists by striking out the 'organic link' with the Comintern. This led to a change of mood in the NAS, and finally, a year later, resulted in a split in that organisation, with the anarcho-syndicalists moving off in one direction, and the remainder affiliating to the RILU.¹²⁰

The attitude of the NAS toward the RILU thus wavered back and forth constantly, although it always evinced a considerable amount of sympathy for that

VakInternationale op 30 Januari 1922 en volgende dagen te Moskou n.d., n.p. On the Central Council, see later in this section, and chapter 5, section 3.

119 'Der Kongress der holländischen Syndikalistien', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 285–8 and *Verslag van het Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat in Nederland over de jaren 1922–1923–1924*, Amsterdam, 1925, pp. 64–8.

120 *Verslag van het Nationaal Arbeids-Secretariaat in Nederland over de jaren 1922–1923–1924*, Amsterdam, 1925, pp. 68–71 and Volkers Bultsma and Evert van der Tuin, *Het Nederlandsch syndicalistisch Vakverbond 1923–1930*, Amsterdam, 1980, pp. 30–1.

organisation, so it was possible to assume that in the last resort it would actually affiliate. Developments in Portugal proceeded in precisely the opposite direction. Here the only national trade-union centre, the *Confederação Geral do Trabalho (Portugal)* (CGTP) [General Confederation of Labour (Portugal)], was syndicalist in tendency. Its representative, Perfeito de Carvalho, did not arrive in Moscow until September 1921, after the RILU foundation congress had ended. He told the Executive Bureau that after a careful reading of the resolutions of the congress, all he could do was express his complete agreement. When he returned home, therefore, he would give his support to affiliation, and the organisation would certainly follow him in this.¹²¹ But in practice things turned out differently. A communist party had been set up in Portugal in the meantime, composed of activists in the syndicalist youth movement. The activities of the newly formed communist party now provoked a determined reaction on the part of the anarchists. In October 1922, the third congress of the CGTP met, attended by Maurín, who was acting as the representative of the RILU. The question of the union's international orientation played a large part in the proceedings. After angry debates, in which 22 speakers participated, the congress rejected affiliation to the RILU by 55 votes against 22 (with eight abstentions and 57 absentees) and declared itself in favour of supporting the attempts being made to create an independent syndicalist international.¹²² Nin noted that only a minority of the congress had actually voted against the RILU, because of the large number of absentees, and he hoped that the confederation would soon change its decision. His hopes were in vain, however. It is true that at the beginning of 1923 a campaign was organised under the watchword 'Berlin or Moscow', and this resulted in the establishment of '*Núcleos sindicalistas revolucionários*', inspired by the example of France and Spain. They started to issue a journal, *A Internacional*, at the end of 1923. But fractional work was not made easier in the subsequent period by a severe crisis in the small communist party, not to speak of the unfavourable general political conditions. The supporters of the RILU therefore finally found they had no other option but to split off from the movement, which they did in 1925.¹²³ But

121 RGASPI 534/3/9/111–12.

122 A.N. 'Der Kongress der Arbeitskonföderation', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 11, November 1922, pp. 750–1 and Manuel Joaquim de Sousa, *O sindicalismo em Portugal*, 4th edn., Porto, 1974, pp. 141–7.

123 See Manuel Joaquim de Sousa, *O sindicalismo em Portugal*, 4th edn., Porto, 1974, pp. 159–61 and 238–9, as well as *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 2, *Les partis communistes des pays latins et l'Internationale communiste dans les années 1923–1927*, edited by Siegfried Bahne, Dordrecht-London, 1983, pp. xxiii–xxvii, 15–25, 51–2, 66–78, 91–3, 116–17, 220–1 and 246–7.

in any case, the CGTP carried very little weight internationally and would not play any role in the IWMA either.¹²⁴

Events developed in a similar way in Latin America. The delegate of the Mexican CGT, Díaz Ramírez, was a member of the newly formed communist party of that country. The CGT itself, however, was still entirely dominated by 'ultra-leftist' notions, and accordingly Díaz Ramírez had voted with the syndicalist minority at the congress on many questions. Nevertheless, he subsequently changed his mind, as is shown by an article he wrote for the RILU organ in October 1921.¹²⁵ In the intervening period, the situation had developed unfavourably for the communist party. There had been repressive measures, including deportations, which deprived the foreign members of the Mexican bureau who had remained in the country of the opportunity to appear in public. The anarchists had received accurate information about the situation in Russia for the first time and they started a public campaign against communism. The first congress of the Mexican CGT met in September, and the communists were in a minority. The congress criticised the formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat and made clear its sympathy for Anarchism. The union's affiliation to the RILU was not initially cancelled, but its continuing membership was made subject to a referendum. In practical terms, the break with the RILU had taken place. The members of the communist youth movement who were present at the congress now withdrew.¹²⁶

In the middle of October, Díaz Ramírez returned to Mexico and immediately began a series of propaganda meetings at which he clashed violently with the anarchists.¹²⁷ In the next few months, there were several strikes and a big tenants' movement which led to a confrontation between the communists and the anarchist CGT leadership on the correct mode of struggle. The CGT

124 During the military dictatorship established in 1926, and particularly after Salazar took power, the anarchists and anarcho-sindicalists were to lose their dominant position in the Portuguese workers' movement. They were supplanted by the communists. On these later developments within the CGTP, see the memoirs of a prominent activist, Emídio Santana, *Memórias de um militante anarco-sindicalista*, Lisbon, n.d., in which the conflict with the supporters of the RILU is also described in detail.

125 M. Ramírez, 'Die neue Aera', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, 29 October 1921, pp. 285–7.

126 Taibo II 1986, pp. 124–7. On the first CGT congress, see also Guillermina Baena Paz, 'La Confederación General de Trabajadores (1921–1931)', *Revista mexicana de ciencias políticas y sociales*, no. 83, January–March 1976, pp. 143–50.

127 Paz 1976, pp. 142–3. See also the report on a meeting organised by the CGT executive in Rosendo Salazar, *Las pugnas de la gleba (Los albores del movimiento obrero en México)*, Mexico 1972, pp. 401–11.

leadership was able to win this fight. In November 1922, at its second congress, the CGT officially sealed its break with the RILU. A report handed in by Díaz Ramírez, who was after all still their delegate to the RILU, was not even read out.¹²⁸ In the subsequent period, the CGT attached itself to the IWMA, but was unable to maintain its position against the state-protected majority trade-union centre, the CROM. It progressively declined in importance. The CROM, on the other hand, despite its moderate character, started in autumn 1921 to make advances to the RILU.

The situation was more complicated in Argentina, owing to the existence of the two FORAS. As we have seen, the anarchist FORA–V. Congress, which renamed itself the FORA–Comunista in 1920, had had a representative at the founding congress of the RILU in the shape of Tom Barker. There he had voted for the French resolution in favour of an independent RILU and against ‘organic links’ with the Comintern, and he had also supported a separate revolutionary seamen’s international. But he also insisted on continuing to work within the RILU framework. The FORA–Comunista finally disavowed him in spring 1922.¹²⁹ Previously, in August 1921, a delegate conference of the organisation, while refusing to merge with the syndicalists, had also condemned the pro-communist fraction for trying to turn the FORA into an appendage of the Russian government with its intrigues.¹³⁰ Each of these resolutions led a minority group to split off. The word ‘communist’ was not removed from the FORA’s official name until the next ordinary congress in March 1923, which also emphasised the anarchist character of the federation, and opened the path to its affiliation to the anarcho-syndicalist international, the IWMA, by organising a referendum among its members. From now on it was known simply as the FORA, since the other FORA, the syndicalist FORA–IX Congress, had in the meantime changed its own name, so there was no possibility of confusion.¹³¹

The fight over whether to join the RILU was much fiercer in the FORA–IX Congress owing to the greater strength of the communist forces within it. In February 1921, its eleventh congress had taken up the idea of a merger between the different unions, and despite great internal disagreements between syndicalists, socialists and communists, this could be achieved in part. A committee which was supposed to contain representatives of the syndicalist FORA, the

128 Taibo II 1986, pp. 155–87. On the second congress, see also Paz 1976, pp. 150–1 and 175.

129 Thorpe 1989, p. 210.

130 Abad de Santillán 1971, p. 258.

131 Abad de Santillán 1971, pp. 263–5.

anarchist FORA and the independent trade unions was reduced by the withdrawal of most of the anarchists to a body dominated by the syndicalists and the independents, and this finally managed to organise a unification congress, though it was extremely difficult to find common ground, according to the secretary of the committee in his report. The congress took place in March 1922 and it only contained a small anarchist minority (14 delegates) alongside the 102 of the syndicalist FORA and 60 members of previously independent trade unions.¹³² Right at the start of the congress, emotions were stirred once again by the question of 'politicians' mandates'. The issue here was the position of the communist Penelón, a member of the Buenos Aires city council, whose mandate from the Printers' Union was questioned. An alliance between anarchists and syndicalists was finally able to dispossess him of his mandate, against the opposition of the communists and socialists.¹³³

The March 1922 congress was characterised by numerous fiercely fought debates and contested votes. What was at stake was, after all, the establishment of a common basis. There was also a more pronounced anarchist and syndicalist mood among the majority of the delegates than had been the case in the FORA-IX Congress hitherto. In a clear bow to the Italian syndicalists, the new organisation was called the *Unión Sindical Argentina*. They were unable to reach agreement on the question of the internationals. The most diverse positions were expressed, from affiliation to the IFTU (or the retention of the old affiliation of the FORA) to the establishment of an independent syndicalist international. Both of these were extreme positions. The RILU had sent a letter to the congress, and was hoping for its affiliation.¹³⁴ Strong minority groups declared their support for conditional, or even unconditional, adherence to the RILU. But the congress decided by a majority to be internationally autonomous for the present. The view was that a future congress would be able to make a definitive judgement on the basis of more adequate information.

This was not the end of the matter, however. Not only did the RILU continue to urge that the new federation affiliate. The syndicalists also came forward

132 On the March 1922 congress, see Oddone 1975, pp. 415–26, Marotta 1960, vol. 3, pp. 51–90 and Andreas Nin, 'Der Einigungskongress des argentinischen Proletariats', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5/6, May/June 1922, pp. 354–5.

133 The motion to disallow the mandate was made by the Union of Telegraphists, and justified on the ground of Penelón's position as a 'functionary of the state'. The communists replied by interjecting that the proposers of the motion were themselves state employees (Oddone 1975, p. 421).

134 'An den Vereinigungskongress der Arbeiterorganisationen Argentiniens', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 2, 15 September 1921, p. 43.

from Berlin with their suggestions.¹³⁵ Both had supporters in the *Unión Sindical Argentina*, and its leadership organised a referendum, which took place in October. All it did, however, was to confirm that there were deep divisions of opinion on the question. 17,000 members opposed participation in any of the internationals, 4,000 wanted simultaneous membership of the RILU and the IWMA, 5,600 were for the RILU alone, 1,500 for the IWMA alone, and 1,000 did not declare a view.¹³⁶ (Later on, the communists and socialists withdrew from the *Unión*, and its membership melted away. Thus the supporters of the RILU could only achieve a minority presence in the highly fragmented spectrum of Argentine trade unionism).

The IWW had already lost much of its influence by this time. Its prestige among the syndicalists of the world was unbroken, however, so that a great deal of importance was attached to its attitude towards the RILU. Its delegate to the RILU congress, George Williams, spent a considerable length of time in Europe, and he took part in the FAUD congress of October 1921.¹³⁷ As a result of his absence, the union was forced to rely for the moment on completely contradictory reports from various other quarters. At the end of September, the IWW organ printed an article by Jack Tanner, the title of which was itself a declaration of intent: 'The Red International of Labor Unions is now a genuine and powerful fact – some differences about tactics at the congress but everyone together in world solidarity'. Tanner himself, however, had not been present at the Moscow congress and his account was based on information provided by other people. While admitting that there were grounds for criticism, he saw a readiness on the part of the majority, not least the CNT delegates, to engage in joint revolutionary action. He also attacked those syndicalists who continued to reject the dictatorship of the proletariat. This had of course not been the position of the IWW delegates. A foretaste of what the resolutions adopted at the RILU congress would mean for the IWW was given by the representatives of American communism, Foster in particular. In his newspaper, *The Voice of Labor*, he attacked the IWW and published contributions by Andreytchine and others that were critical of it. The IWW's own organ, *Industrial Solidarity*, defended itself fiercely against these attacks.¹³⁸

135 Marotta 1960, vol. 3, pp. 109–11 and 'Schriftwechsel mit dem Syndikalistischen Verband Argentinien', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 11, November 1922, pp. 793–5.

136 Marotta 1960, vol. 3, pp. 111–12.

137 'I.W.W. Greets German Syndicalists', *Industrial Solidarity*, no. 163, 17 December 1921, and Williams 1921, p. 51.

138 'As to the Red International', *Industrial Solidarity*, no. 159, 29 October 1921.

When Williams arrived back in the USA at the beginning of December, he reported his impressions to the General Executive Board of the IWW. Its reaction was immediate. It recommended against joining the RILU. It gave various reasons for this: the composition of the delegations had been manipulated, the congress was dominated by members of a political party, but, above all, it had proclaimed the need to destroy the IWW.¹³⁹ At the same time, the IWW newspaper began publishing Williams's report, which was then distributed in an expanded form as a pamphlet. The report was accompanied in the paper by numerous articles in which other visitors to Russia described their disappointments, congress delegates were 'exposed' as communists, in other words as politicians, and finally negative reactions from the whole of the international syndicalist spectrum were reported.¹⁴⁰

The communists reacted to this by organising a communist fraction in the IWW, which went by the name of the Temporary Committee for Working Class Unity and issued a periodical with the title *Unity Bulletin*.¹⁴¹ The most important communist spokesman was George Hardy, who was finally expelled from the IWW in March 1922. (He went to Europe at the beginning of May, where he worked for the RILU, and he represented the communist IWW minority at the second RILU congress).¹⁴² The supporters of the RILU possessed strongholds mainly in certain newspapers. The IWW leadership reacted by removing the editors of the IWW East Coast organ (*Industrial Unionist*), and the Italian and

139 'Statement by General Executive Board', *Industrial Solidarity*, no. 163, 17 December 1921. Also printed in Williams 1921, pp. 55–60. See also A. Souchy 'Die Stellung der I.W.W. zur Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 2, and Pierre Ramus, 'Die Absage des Weltverbandes der amerikanischen Industriearbeiter an Moskau', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 3, 1922.

140 *Industrial Solidarity*, nos. 166, 7 January 1922, 168, 28 January 1922 and 172, 18 February 1922.

141 An intensive search has only revealed four issues of this paper, which appeared in Chicago. These were numbers 2 to 5, covering the period from January to March 1922, so that the periodical presumably began to appear at the end of 1921. These issues contained sharp attacks on the IWW leadership. They also reported on the measures taken against the communist opposition and publicised the resolutions of the RILU congress.

142 Hardy 1956, pp. 145–8, 167–8 and Thorpe 1989, p. 301. On his position, see George Hardy, 'The Red International of Labor Unions', *Industrial Pioneer*, no. 10, November 1921, pp. 12–14. In the course of 1922, the communist group in the Wobblies withdrew from fractional activities and went over to working directly within the framework of the communist party. Hardy himself was delegated by the pro-communist minority in the Wobblies to attend the congress of December 1921, which founded a 'legal' communist party, the Workers' Party. After the second RILU congress, however, he only returned once more to the USA, for a short visit.

Hungarian-language newspapers.¹⁴³ On the eve of the second RILU congress, the RILU's Executive Bureau claimed that the communist current included 'roughly a third' of the IWW, an organisation 'which has declined very considerably in the last few years'.¹⁴⁴

At the beginning of 1922, Haywood appealed from Moscow to the IWW membership to elect delegates to the second RILU congress.¹⁴⁵ His prestige within the organisation had, however, already been very much shaken. The RILU itself waited a long time before taking a similar initiative. Not until August did it send an 'Appeal to the Grass Roots of the IWW', asking the IWW leadership to publish it in the organisation's press so as to counter the lies spread by Williams. In reality, said the RILU, the differences between them were not as great as the official IWW press claimed. Moreover, the IWW press was competing with the bourgeois press in reactionary agitation against Soviet Russia. The RILU wanted revolutionary unity and it therefore called on the IWW to send delegates to Moscow.¹⁴⁶

In November, the General Executive Board of the IWW replied at length, rejecting this attempt at a *rapprochement*. The RILU remains a politically led international, it said. It would like to divert the IWW from its course of *independent* organising. But the IWW has its roots in the American situation.¹⁴⁷ Shortly afterwards, the 14th Annual Convention confirmed this attitude and explicitly rejected the idea of sending a delegation. It was, however, ready to engage in a friendly exchange of information.¹⁴⁸ In mid-January 1923, long after the second RILU congress had taken place, the RILU leadership officially and regretfully took note of the position adopted by the IWW, in a letter signed by Lozovsky. The RILU was, however, certain, the letter added, that if the IWW gave greater thought to the problem, it would have no other option but to affiliate to it.¹⁴⁹

The RILU continued to make attempts to exert influence on the IWW in the subsequent period. One reason for this persistence was certainly that after rejecting the RILU, the IWW had also refused to join the syndicalist interna-

143 Information on this was given at the 14th IWW Convention (*Industrial Solidarity*, no. 212, 7 October 1922). Hardy (1956, p. 146) describes the winning back of the Hungarian newspaper by the IWW leadership as a 'raid' and an act of 'gangsterism'.

144 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 146.

145 'I.W.W. "Free Press" Fails to Publish Haywood's Plea for Affiliation With R.I.L.U.', *Unity Bulletin*, no. 5, March 1922.

146 IWW Collection, Wayne State University, Box 25, Folders 25 and 26.

147 *I.W.W. Reply to the Red Trade Union International*, Chicago, 1922.

148 'Resolutions on International', *Industrial Solidarity*, no. 213, 2 December 1922.

149 IWW Collection, Wayne State University, Box 25, Folder 29.

tional (the IWMA). This decision was a bolt from the blue for the founders of the IWMA, because the IWW had informed the preliminary conference in June 1922 of its fundamental agreement and had explained that it was only absent because the invitation had arrived too late. But then the 14th Convention had formulated its refusal to take part in the Berlin congress of the IWMA almost in the same breath as it rejected the RILU invitation. Nor did it reverse this decision, despite an exchange of letters with the IWMA.¹⁵⁰ The IWW did not give any reasons for its refusal. They were probably connected with its continuing sympathy for the Bolshevik Revolution. In addition, it lacked the traditional connections with anarchism which played a significant role in strengthening opposition to the RILU among the European syndicalists. It also reflected the IWW's distrust of the traditional principle of craft (instead of industrial) organisation characteristic of European syndicalism. Ultimately, though, the IWW's refusal to join the IWMA expressed its feeling that it was itself already an 'international', with its 'foreign administrations' in Latin America and its offshoots in the English-speaking countries.

In any case, Moscow continued to make great efforts to gain the support of the IWW. When in March 1923 there was a strike on the Pacific coast, both the Comintern and the RILU sent telegrams of solidarity, calling for the establishment of a united front.¹⁵¹ The IWW immediately exploited this to mount a polemic against the American communists. Moscow, the article said, had recognised the role of the IWW, whereas the American communists of the Workers' Party ignored it in their newspaper.¹⁵² Moreover, on 1 May 1923, the General Executive Board of the IWW sent a long letter directly to Lozovsky, reinforcing this attack on the American communists. According to the GEB, Moscow had been misinformed about the situation in the USA, and about who was actually significant in the class struggle. The communists, the letter said, could only engage in senseless polemics.¹⁵³ This might have appeared to the RILU as an offer, or even an attempt, to make friends, but it was soon confronted with another rejection, at the next IWW Convention, the 15th, held in November and December 1923. Representatives of the RILU – apparently Cannon and Minor – repeatedly tried to get permission to speak at the Convention. They were provided with a mandate from the RILU, and the plan was to encourage

150 Box 22, Folders 13 and 22.

151 IWW Collection, Wayne State University, Box 25, Folder 30. On this strike, see Foner 1991, vol. 9, pp. 32–52.

152 E.W. Latchem, 'Communist International contradicts Workers' Party Policy', *Industrial Solidarity*, no. 228, 17 March 1923.

153 IWW Collection, Wayne State University, Box 25, Folder 31.

the IWW to send delegates to the coming RILU congress by referring explicitly to the decision of the second RILU congress to end 'organic links' with the Comintern. They were allowed to make short addresses of greeting, but the IWW's attitude towards the RILU – as indeed towards the IWMA – remained firm.¹⁵⁴ Attempts to influence the IWW were even intensified in the next year, when it entered into a severe crisis, leading to a split, which was also an expression of its rapidly shrinking influence.¹⁵⁵ Harrison George in particular devoted his attention to the IWW.¹⁵⁶ He led a delegation of three, which wanted to speak as the representative of the 'Red International' at the 16th Annual Convention held in October and November 1924 (this was the Convention at which the movement split). The request was denied.¹⁵⁷ He also represented the RILU at a continental congress organised by the IWW seamen's union, the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union (other communist delegates, from the Soviet Union and Uruguay, also took part in this conference).¹⁵⁸ But ultimately this had no impact on the organisation.

154 *Minutes of the Fifteenth General Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World held at Emmett Memorial Hall, Chicago, Ill., November 12–December 3, 1923*, n.d., n.p., pp. 8–9, 32–3 and 51. Side by side with the appeal from the RILU, the communist party also appealed directly to the IWW, calling for solidarity with the German working class and a united front in the struggle against repression in the USA (pp. 31–2).

155 Gambs 1932, pp. 86–9 and 111–12, and Dubofsky 1969, pp. 465–8.

156 See Harrison George, 'Will the I.W.W. Fight Decadence?', *Liberator*, no. 8, August 1924, pp. 26–8.

157 *Minutes of the Sixteenth Institutional General Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World. October 13–November 10, 1924. Emmett Memorial Hall, Chicago, Ill.*, n.d., n.p., pp. 66–7.

158 This 'Second Congress of the Marine Workers of the Western Hemisphere' took place in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 20 and 21 March 1926, and had been called by the Marine Transport Workers' Industrial Union (MTWIU) of the IWW. (The first congress took place in New Orleans in March 1925. The second congress was originally intended to meet in Havana, but had to be transferred elsewhere owing to the seizure of power by the Machado dictatorship). The resolutions were adopted unanimously. At the start of the congress, the MTWIU delegate stated his opposition to the interference of political parties, but also spoke in support of the united front. A programme of struggle for economic demands was adopted and a call was made for a united front against imperialism combined with a simultaneous fight against the Pan-American Federation of Labor as its agent, which was particularly promoted by the social attachés appointed by the CROM to the Mexican embassies in Latin America. See Harrison George, 'The Montevideo Conference of Marine Workers. Report and Recommendations', Lovestone Collection, Hoover Institution, Box 228; 'Summary of Minutes of the Continental Congress of Marine Workers', IWW Collection, Wayne State University, Box 76, Folder 14; and *Marine Worker*, no. 11, 1 June 1925 and no. 2, May 1926.

Thus the communists were unable to draw over to their side any large, firmly organised parts of the IWW. Perhaps the only reason for this was their failure to win over any prominent leading personalities except Haywood, who was tainted by the stain of having committed a breach of confidence.¹⁵⁹ Even so, the American communists were able to recruit a considerable number of individual cadres from the Wobblies. As the American social scientist John S. Gambs wrote in 1932, 'Possibly the I.W.W. have lost as many as 2,000 members to the Communists; possibly 10 to 20 per cent of the Communist Party is now composed of former I.W.W.ers or former active sympathizers'.¹⁶⁰

In Canada, in contrast, there was a reversal of the situation which had appeared to prevail at the founding congress of the RILU. The Lumber Workers (the LWIU) distanced themselves from their delegate Cascaden, who did not, they said, have a representative mandate but was only the delegate of a local group, and they declared their affiliation to the RILU.¹⁶¹ Meanwhile, the One Big Union group, whose representative at the congress had been one of the delegates who co-operated with the communists, now declared its opposition to the RILU. It gave as a reason the RILU's rejection of 'independent trade unions'.¹⁶²

The independent German 'unions', just like Williams and Cascaden, had belonged to the hard core of the opposition at the founding congress. What

159 Cannon, for example, tried very hard to recruit the legendary founder of the organisation, Vincent St. John. He hoped that by winning over St. John he would gain a counterweight to the New York milieu which dominated the communist party, with its strongly intellectual and immigrant character. He almost succeeded in convincing him when they met in 1921. But St. John never took the final step towards communism. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who was also present at the meeting, and was famous for her role in a number of strikes, co-operated in solidarity campaigns and then in fact did join the party in the 1930s (Cannon 1962, pp. 304–7).

160 Gambs 1932, p. 89. The question of the American colony in the Siberian mining region of the Kuzbas also played an incidental role in the attempts to influence the IWW. This industrial project had been developed by certain American delegates in Moscow, including Haywood, in the summer of 1921. The plan was to mobilise American techniques and skilled American workers to develop the area, and it aimed at securing the support of the Wobblies. Many Wobblies were in fact recruited at first. But there were many difficulties in the way of their activities in Siberia, and the IWW did not officially sponsor the venture. After the mid-1920s, this American industrial colony was turned into a group of ordinary Soviet enterprises. (See J.P. Morray 1983, *Project Kuzbas: American Workers in Siberia (1921–1926)*, and Gambs 1932, p. 76).

161 'Anschluss an die R.G.I.', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, p. 223.

162 See chapter 4, section 1, note 8.

was at stake for them, after all, was their continued existence as independent organisations, since the RILU wanted to subsume them under the communist fractions working in the ADGB. Immediately after the end of the founding congress, they had been given an ultimatum by the Central Council to put into effect its resolutions, to which their representatives could only reply that the decision on such matters lay with congresses of their organisations. It could be foreseen that the AAU would break with the RILU. This prospect had already emerged at the congress of the KAPD, the political party with which the AAU was closely connected, in mid-September.¹⁶³ The actual break happened at an AAU conference held at the beginning of November. The main argument against the RILU was its tactic of 'cell-building', which proved, according to the AAU, that it was counter-revolutionary. Instead of the RILU, a genuinely revolutionary international would have to be created. Erich Melcher of the MEB was present at the conference, as a representative of the RILU. Despite making repeated contributions to the debate, he was unable to overcome the prevailing mood among the delegates.¹⁶⁴

The atmosphere was different in the two organisations which were already on the periphery of the KPD, the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the Gelsenkirchen Union, though even their relationship with the party was highly conflictual, and they had formed part of the opposition at the RILU congress on the question of trade-union independence. The resolutions of the founding congress of the RILU were not, however, at the centre of the arguments at the emergency national conference of the *Schiffahrtsbund* held at the beginning of October. What created an explosive situation was rather the proposal to set up a Seamen's International, which had been rejected by the international seamen's conference. The RILU position was that the *Schiffahrtsbund* should join the ADGB-affiliated Transport Workers' Union instead. The MEB representatives at the conference, Rusch and Farwig, put their position on these points with great energy, and they could count on the support of the two international guests (from the Transport Workers' Federation of the NAS and the Danish Seamen's

163 The KAPD congress received a report on the Third Comintern Congress and discussed the creation of a new international. It also received information on the founding of the RILU and discussed the establishment of an association of independent 'unions'. (*Protokoll des ausserordentlichen Parteitages der Kommunistischen Arbeiter-Partei Deutschlands vom 11. bis 14.9. 1921 in Berlin*, edited by Clemens Klockner, Darmstadt, 1986, particularly pp. 121–59).

164 'Konferenz der Allgemeinen Arbeiter-Union', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, 15 December 1921, pp. 591–4, 'Bericht von der Reichskonferenz der Allgemeinen Arbeiter-Union Deutschlands', *Kampfzruf*, no. 29, 1921, and RGASPI 534/4/9/61–75.

Union). When the vast majority of the delegates stuck to their previous position, the MEB representatives left the conference in protest. The FAUD had sent Rudolf Rocker to the *Schiffahrtsbund* conference as a delegate, and when it held its own congress a month later it made great efforts to attract the seamen. It had to be admitted, however, that a section of the *Schiffahrtsbund* was highly sympathetic to the RILU.¹⁶⁵

The FAUD's attempts at a *rapprochement* also fell on stony ground as far as the majority of the *Schiffahrtsbund* was concerned, as was demonstrated by critical remarks on the FAUD in the seamen's newspaper. As the dominant force in its branch of industry – since the beginning of 1922 its membership had risen to over 10,000 – the *Schiffahrtsbund* was entirely oriented towards a militant defence of trade-union interests. Despite rejecting the reformist conceptions of the ADGB-affiliated Transport Workers' Union, it endeavoured to achieve united action with it, or indeed even with the ITF. It was suspicious of the FAUD, regarding it as a 'sect'.¹⁶⁶

As early as January 1922, there was a thorough discussion between the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the Central European Bureau. As a result it was agreed that the former would carry out its international activities through the IPC of the Transport Workers and at the same time work inside the ITF. It must be reconstructed so as to become an organisation for the whole industry. This required its incorporation into the Transport Workers' Union.¹⁶⁷ Finally, at a national conference held at the beginning of May, the *Schiffahrtsbund* officially cut its connection with the FAUD and declared its affiliation to the RILU.¹⁶⁸ Albert Walter from Hamburg, who had long supported the KPD within the union, was elected to the leadership, and he would in the future also play a role in the RILU's work among seamen. The syndicalist minority now withdrew from the

165 'Ausserordentlicher Bundestag', *Schiffahrtswarte*, no. 19, 15 October 1921 and no. 20, 31 October 1921; 'Der Deutsche Seemannsbund zerreisst die Einheitsfront', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 40, 25 October 1921; and A.Ch. 'Der Kongress des deutschen Schiffahrtsbundes und der Syndikalismus', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 39, 1921. On the relationship between the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the RILU in general, see Rübner 1994, pp. 109–12. See also the account of the process of affiliation given by the IPC of the transport workers in *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet propagandy transportnykh rabochikh. Avgust 1921 g. – Noiaabr' 1922 g.*, Moscow, 1922, pp. 21–8.

166 See, for example, 'Das Verhältnis des Deutschen Schiffahrts-Bundes zur F.A.U.D.', *Schiffahrtswarte*, no. 2, 16 January 1922.

167 RGASPI 534/4/24/14–17, and 'Der Anschluss des Schiffahrtsbundes an die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 2, 1 February 1922, pp. 111–13. A further discussion took place in February (RGASPI 534/4/24/69–70).

168 'Die Ergebnisse des Bundestages', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, 5 May 1922.

Schiffahrtsbund, and under the leadership of Otto Rieger it established a seamen's union which was affiliated to both the FAUD and IWW, but was only of significance in Pomerania.¹⁶⁹

The Gelsenkirchen Union had underlined its commitment to retaining an independent organisation by holding a joint congress from 4–8 September 1921 with the Free Association of Agricultural Workers and the Berlin Association of Workers by Hand and Brain, at which the three amalgamated to form a single body, the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain in Germany (UdHuK).¹⁷⁰ Of the approximately 150,000 members, 120,000 came from the Gelsenkirchen Union alone, which was a genuine mass organisation in the Ruhr district (and also in a number of small mining districts). The merger between the three unions raised in principle the claim to create a revolutionary trade-union organisation which would cover all areas of the economy. This inevitably led to a conflict with the KPD, which until then had accepted the Gelsenkirchen Union as the organisation for the Ruhr district because this was an accomplished fact, and had sought to co-operate closely with it. Now, however, the new union's activities appeared to endanger the strategic orientation the KPD had chosen for its trade-union work. Nor was the KPD greatly mollified by new union's firm rejection of overtures from the KAPD and the AAU aimed at getting it to join a cartel of revolutionary industrial unions.¹⁷¹

Despite a call by the representatives of the KPD and the RILU, Walcher and Heckert respectively, for the unification congress of the UdHuK to place itself clearly and unambiguously behind the Moscow resolutions, it voted for unclear formulations which left the door open for the most varied interpretations. It recognised the leadership of the RILU, and declared that it was ready to abandon the slogan 'Get Out of the Trade Unions'. But there was also a call for the union to become the collection point for all the people expelled from the Free Trade Unions. And in a long report on the RILU congress, Bartels declared that the Gelsenkirchen Union had realised that it had come on the scene too

169 See Rübner 1994, pp. 116–23.

170 In general on this union, see Goch 1994. On the relationship between the RILU and the union, see *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 103–5.

171 The AAU had unsuccessfully put forward this idea at the unification congress of the three unions. A week after that the KAPD party congress took place, at which two representatives of the UdHuK were present, but they left before the end in protest against the 'declaration of war on Moscow' by the KAPD. (See 'Zur Reichskonferenz der Gelsenkirchener Union', *Kampfzruf*, no. 20, 1921; 'Die Kopf- und Handarbeiter-Union gegen die KAPD, für die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 424, 14 September 1921; and *Protokoll des KAPD-Parteitages, September 1921*, pp. 121–59).

late. If it was now submitting to the RILU, this was for reasons of discipline, and not because the union regarded its own position as incorrect.¹⁷²

This attitude inevitably gave rise to the suspicion that a back door was being left open to allow the union to proceed, despite its disclaimers, to set up a revolutionary trade-union centre at the next opportunity. But since the new union had committed itself clearly to the RILU and had agreed to carry out its resolutions at least in appearance, a tolerable compromise seemed to have been found. That this was the view taken by the RILU's Executive Bureau can be seen from the line it took in the next few weeks. At a sitting on 14 October, it discussed a long report from Heckert, and it came to the conclusion that the union should now be pushed to orient itself towards rejoining the ADGB. The expelled trade unionists should agitate for their readmission to the ADGB trade unions and the new union, the UdHuK, should strengthen its trade-union character by increasing its membership contributions. This would make it possible to finance strikes, and at the same time, the increased level of contributions would remove non-political reasons for a change of organisation. It must also form industrial sections.¹⁷³ Close co-operation with the KPD in the trade unions should also be guaranteed. This would be done by creating a Working Committee, in which the trade-union section of the KPD would co-ordinate its activities with the independent 'unions' which stood close to the party, and the organisations of the expelled workers.¹⁷⁴

But it was one thing to pass a resolution on paper, and quite another thing to turn it into a reality. The relationship between the KPD and the new union was marked by constant conflict over the next few months. Again and again the union overstepped the framework set for it by the party, and this provoked sharp criticism from the party, and secret decisions to mobilise the KPD members within it. But fresh compromises were found equally frequently, by which

172 On the founding congress of the UdHuK, see the reports in *Die Rote Fahne* (no. 411, 7 September 1921, no. 413, 8 September 1921 and no. 422, 13 September 1921) and also in *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 36, 17 September 1921 and no. 38, 1 October 1921. There are partial minutes preserved in SAPMO I 2/708/4–46.

173 RGASPI 534/3/9/139–40.

174 The formation of this Working Committee was decided at a meeting that took place on 29 August 1921, just after the national conference of communist trade unionists. It was attended by representatives of the KPD fractions in the ADGB and the three unions which founded the UdHuK two weeks later. The AAU and the FAUD did not send any representatives, despite having been invited. (See the minutes in SAPMO I 2/708/1 and the discussion of the Executive Bureau on 22 September. On this, see RGASPI 534/3/9/99–100. See also *Protokolle des Arbeitsausschusses der Jahre 1921/22*, in SAPMO I 2/708/87/52–82).

the union leadership publicly withdrew its more extreme claims.¹⁷⁵ The relationship improved in the second half of 1922. The union now agreed to the demand of the KPD that it fix its character as a trade union more firmly, and by giving up all attempts at an independent role it ceased to place the party's leading role in question. Moreover, the KPD's influence in the ADGB had increased considerably. The KPD now found it was in a position to make use of the independent weight provided by the UdHuK.¹⁷⁶

This improved relationship was evident at the second congress of the union, at the beginning of October 1922. The majority of its members, according to the newspaper issued by the KPD trade-union section, were trying to establish 'fruitful cooperation with the trade union opposition and the communist party'. This attitude was expressed above all in an explicit recognition of the leading role of the KPD.¹⁷⁷

Both the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain were now firmly anchored in the RILU. Since the FAUD hardly played a role any more, and the AAU too sank into complete insignificance in the course of 1922, the road to the establishment of a syndicalist alternative to the ADGB with mass influence was now blocked in Germany. The KPD had directed the vast majority of revolutionary trade unionists towards fractional work within the ADGB, and, as was shown at the 11th ADGB Congress in June 1922, it was able to win a large amount of influence in this way.¹⁷⁸ But it had not succeeded in persuading the UdHuK and the FAUD to strengthen their fractional work within the ADGB. The time would only become ripe for this when the KPD – as well as the Comintern and the RILU – had passed through a number of abrupt reversals in their trade-union orientation, following on from the failure of the 'German October'. Even then, the shift towards work within the ADGB would not take place without big internal conflicts.

175 See, for example, the 1922 minutes of the KPD's trade-union centre, in which it is Walcher who mainly formulates criticisms of the union (SAPMO I 2/708/9) and also the *Protokolle des Arbeitsausschusses der Jahre 1921/22* mentioned in note 89.

176 See Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 199–201.

177 'Zum II. Kongress der Union der Hand- und Kopfarbeiter', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 34, 7 October 1922. The next issue, no. 35, 21 October 1922, contains the resolutions of the congress, and a letter from the Executive Bureau, in which it appeals to the union to concentrate on the mining industry and to try to establish a united trade-union front.

178 See G. Smoljanski, 'Schmerzfragen der deutschen Gewerkschaftsbewegung (Zum Kongress der freien Gewerkschaften in Leipzig)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 6, 1922, pp. 356–61. See also the collection of documents issued by the KPD trade-union section, *Wohin steuern die freien Gewerkschaften?*, Berlin, 1922.

Up to this point, the achievements of the Red International of Labour Unions seemed to be rather limited. Meanwhile, the conflict within the revolutionary minority in the CGT took on particular significance, for several reasons. For one thing, the CGT possessed a degree of 'symbolic capital', in view of its historic role in the formation of syndicalism. Equally significant, however, was its weight as one of the leading national trade-union centres in Europe. Since the CGT Minority had good prospects of winning the leadership from the Majority, it appeared that if the RILU could obtain a dominating influence on it, this would open the way to taking over the CGT as a whole. This explains the great emphasis the RILU leadership placed on the discussions with the CSRs and also its disappointment over the oppositional role of the French delegation at the RILU congress.¹⁷⁹

Lozovsky suggested in a letter of 8 November 1921 to Rosmer that the French delegates had inspired the syndicalists' movement to reject the RILU: 'What confusion the French syndicalists have created in the minds of the syndicalists of other countries! ... According to information we have received from Mexico and Argentina, the position of the French syndicalists has already borne fruit there. The mistrust that already existed has grown. The German syndicalists are also trying to make capital out of the erroneous position of the French syndicalists: they have taken it into their heads to found their own syndicalist international in Düsseldorf'.¹⁸⁰ Wayne Thorpe rightly warns against concluding from this that the international syndicalist opposition was nothing but an echo of the French position.¹⁸¹ In other organisations, the anti-RILU line emerged from an internal shift of opinion, in which the attitude of the CSRs only represented an additional argument, though a very powerful one. Moreover, there were also some syndicalists who returned from Russia as convinced adherents of the RILU. It would be wrong, however, to attach too much weight to Thorpe's objection. Developments in France were of decisive significance for the further existence of the RILU. 'Whether the RILU succeeded or not', as Jean Charles has written, 'depended to a great degree on the French syndicalists'.¹⁸²

Shortly after the founding congress, it did indeed seem to Moscow that a reconciliation might be possible. In a 'private meeting' on 13 August between representatives of the Comintern and the RILU and the French delegates who

179 See numerous letters from Rosmer, Godonnèche, Souvarine and others printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 290–321.

180 Quoted in Charles 1978 (1), p. 192.

181 Thorpe makes his comment in the course of a critique of Charles's position (Thorpe 1989, p. 307).

182 Charles 1978 (1), p. 192.

had formed part of the opposition at the congress, an agreement appeared to be on the horizon. The French delegates declared that they were in any case supporters of affiliation to the RILU, but they did not want to accept it in the concrete form in which it had been presented. Zinoviev himself took up the idea suggested by one of the French delegates that an action committee be set up as a 'connecting link' between the two internationals, the RILU and the Comintern, and between the adherents of the RILU and the communist party at the national level. A memorandum signed by all those present was worked out. It included this idea, and also explicitly asserted that despite the vehemence of the arguments, there had been unanimity concerning 99 percent of the questions discussed at the congress.¹⁸³ After its return to France, however, the delegation changed its mind again. As Godonnèche wrote to Lozovsky at the end of December, 'Sirolle and his friends, who left Moscow in a conciliatory state of mind, arrived here more anarchist-inclined than they had been before'.¹⁸⁴

What happened in France was determined by the outcome of the CGT congress in Lille, which took place between 25–30 July. At the start, it was already brought to the verge of breaking up because of the tumultuous scenes sparked off by statements made by Fimmen.¹⁸⁵ The significance of the Lille

183 Printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 308–15. This discussion was overshadowed by the expulsion of Michel Relenk, brought about by his former allies. He had intrigued after the congress, it was said, and made an offer to Zinoviev and Trotsky, among other people, that he would conduct a campaign in France for affiliation to the RILU if he received appropriate financial assistance, since he had changed his mind about the issue in the meantime. Relenk did not deny this, and he was compelled to leave the meeting, despite his protests. After his return to France he made himself the chief prosecution witness against the RILU with his pamphlet on the subject, though without entering into detail on his own behaviour during the congress. (There is some information on Relenk's attempts to arrange a meeting with Lenin in *Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. Biograficheskaya Khronika*, vol. 11 1980, pp. 261 and 275).

184 Quoted in Charles 1978 (1), p. 190. This article also included a similar quotation from Rosmer. The CSR leadership, in its declaration issued in the middle of August (see note 89) demanded the immediate return of all the delegates who had remained in Russia, clearly in order to prevent any further concessions that might result from a lengthy stay in Moscow. In fact, Sirolle adopted a position which placed him in opposition to all sides: namely, one should enter the RILU, but fight within it as a syndicalist faction for its independence. (Henri Sirolle, 'Après Saint-Étienne', *Le Libéraire*, 4–11 August 1922).

185 On the course of the Lille congress, see *XXIIe congrès national corporatif (XVIIe de la C.G.T.). Tenu à Lille du 25 au 30 Juillet 1921. Compte rendu des travaux*, Villeneuve, 1921. See also A. Souchy, 'Der Kongress der französischen Gewerkschaften', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 32, 1921

congress was underlined by the fact that the most important spokesmen of the CSRs preferred to attend it rather than make the journey to Moscow, which is why the French delegation at the RILU congress was not very representative, measured against the actual leading group of the CSR movement.

The discussions at Lille were marked by a repetition of earlier clashes: violent revolution was pitted against gradual change; liberty against dictatorship; the independence of the trade unions against their subordination. For almost every speaker, the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam?' occupied the foreground. Nevertheless, all sides expressed their support for the Charter of Amiens. It was just that each side interpreted it differently, and accused the other side of abandoning it. Occasionally, too, the history of the prewar discussions in the CGT was dragged up again, as when, for example, they referred to the attempts of the orthodox Marxists around Jules Guesde to subject the union to the control of the socialist party, or when Jouhaux boasted about his struggle against the reformist temptation. They also tried to connect the battles of the present with the disputes that had raged in the First International (such as the fight of the federalists who followed Bakunin against the centralists who followed Marx). In all these arguments, the CGT Majority faction were very concerned to avoid appearing as reformists. The reformists, they said, had been the supporters of the old pre-1914 Right, against whom they had fought for reasons which remained valid.

The Majority did not hesitate to put salt on the wounds of their opponents by referring to the resolutions of the RILU congress and the conflicts within the Minority, and by announcing that from now on they would have to observe Moscow's instructions.¹⁸⁶ The resolution of the Minority gave some indication of how uncomfortable their situation was. It stated that the CGT must withdraw from the IFTU because of its connection with the International Labour Office, and it would then be able to join the RILU 'on condition that its statutes respect the independence of the trade union movement'.¹⁸⁷

But despite all this, the course of the congress confirmed the impression that had already emerged in the months before it. The dominant position of the Majority was on the point of being overturned. The business report of the *Commission Administrative* was adopted by 1,556 votes against 1,348 (with 46

(Souchy was present at the congress as an observer). The congress is analysed in Labi 1964, pp. 199–204. See below on the tumult unleashed by Fimmen's remarks.

186 Merrheim in particular was very well informed about these matters thanks to his international associations. See his speech printed in the congress minutes, *XXIIe congrès national* 1921, pp. 221–41.

187 *XXIIe congrès national* 1921, p. 295.

abstentions), while the resolution on future tasks received 1,572 votes (for the Majority) against 1,325 (for the CSRs).¹⁸⁸ The relation of forces was thus roughly 53 percent to 45 percent.

The Minority was not a single *bloc*. During its pre-congress discussions, severe conflicts between the adherents of *La Vie Ouvrière* and the 'pure' syndicalists and anarchists around *Le Libéraire* had come to the surface. The central issues were the relationship with Moscow, the behaviour of the delegation there (Tommasi in particular, the only delegate who had arrived back from Moscow so far, was sharply attacked for supporting the Bolsheviks), and the fate of the Russian anarchists. One subject that was not discussed, however, was what action to take in the future, in particular the question of whether the Minority should seek a split as soon as possible, even at the cost of abandoning the attempt to secure a majority beforehand, or give priority to the struggle to maintain unity in the face of the Majority. The Minority's failure to address this question determined future developments. In a commentary attached to its report on these discussions, *Le Libéraire* spoke of 'profound disunity', but it also pointed out that the Minority had been scared to wash its dirty linen in public. It had therefore only included 'simple formulae' in its resolution for the CGT congress, expressing a kind of minimal consensus about the aims of revolutionary syndicalism.¹⁸⁹ In actual fact, the Minority's course was now being set entirely by the anarchists and the 'pure' syndicalists.

It was not without reason that the representative of the PCF, Frossard, remained silent at the Lille congress, in contrast with his active involvement at the previous CGT congress held in Orleans.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, when the Central Council of the RILU drew up its greetings to the Lille congress, it gave a central place to the promise that the 'organic link' between the two internationals by no means meant the subordination of the trade-union movement to a political organisation. Trade-union autonomy had not been put in doubt.¹⁹¹

Every factor in the situation was now moving towards a split in the CGT. Fimmen set the tone at the beginning of the congress. He asked why the Minority were still in the CGT. This was a roundabout way of calling on them to withdraw. His speech provoked a tremendous row (which is suppressed in the official

188 *XXIIe congrès national* 1921, pp. 152 and 307.

189 The report was published by *Le Libéraire*, 29 July–5 August 1921, under the heading 'Le Fédéralisme triomphe. Congrès minoritaire (Lille, 23–24 juillet)'.
 190 Labi 1964, pp. 202–3. Frossard's speech in Orleans is published in *XIXe congrès national* 1920, pp. 348–60.

191 'Aufruf an den Kongress in Lille', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, 30 August 1921, p. 36.

minutes) and it caused the representatives of the Minority to reply to Fimmen in their press organs.¹⁹² What they did not know was that Fimmen was acting still more decisively behind the scenes, giving this advice to Jouhaux in a letter of 6 August, for instance: 'What is necessary is to have the courage to intervene energetically, ruthlessly and without pity, against the individuals who are tearing the movement apart'. This was a barely concealed call for their expulsion, to which Oudegeest added his own voice in a letter sent two days later.¹⁹³

The split had already begun in a number of individual trade unions and regional associations. This was hidden at the Lille congress by the fact that pretty well all disputed mandates were accepted, in other words where a trade union had split the mandates of both sides were recognised. Officially, the Minority had again been given the right to put forward their views within their trade unions, and this was confirmed by the Majority's resolution. They were, however, obliged to maintain trade-union discipline. Their organisations, in other word the CSRs, would not be permitted to replace the trade unions.¹⁹⁴

A decision came closer at a meeting of the *Comité Confédéral National* (CCN) held from 19–21 September. The organisations belonging to the Majority were recognised in a number of disputed cases, but in practice these were parallel organisations set up in places where the Minority had taken over the leadership. Trade-union branches which did not accept the decisions of the congress would place themselves outside the organisation, it was added. The newly elected leadership of the CGT – the *Commission Administrative* and the *Bureau Confédéral* – was no longer chosen on a proportional basis, but consisted exclusively of supporters of the Majority, and it was empowered to use all legitimate sanctions. In the meantime, however, the Majority had become numerically weaker. It had lost its absolute majority in the most important votes. It had only a relative majority (46 percent to 43 percent) and was therefore dependent on the attitude of the small group of delegates who abstained.¹⁹⁵

192 Fimmen's speech is printed in *XXIIe congrès national* 1921, pp. 307–11. Monatte referred to 'Fimmen's provocation', describing him as the 'loudmouth of social democracy' ('En revenant de Lille', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 118, 5 August 1921). There were other articles too in the same paper: 'Fimmen chez lui', no. 122, 2 September 1921, and A. Rosmer, 'Les mensonges et les faux de M. Edo Fimmen', no. 125, 23 September 1921. Rosmer had made Fimmen's acquaintance already in 1913 at the IFTU congress of that year, and he now reported on the negative impression he had formed at that time. Within two years, however, communist assessments of Fimmen were to change completely.

193 Both letters are printed in Georges, Tintant and Renauld 1962, pp. 524–30.

194 *XXIIe congrès national* 1921, pp. 292–3.

195 Labi 1964, pp. 207–14.

In view of this situation, there was now an increase in the number of people in the CSRs who were no longer ready to make concessions. At a conference held at the end of October, a proposal was made to create a revolutionary CGT. There were warning voices as well though, and counter-proposals were made to disband the CSRs first as a means of securing unity. It was possible at least to unite around the idea of postponing the formation of a new CGT for an indefinite period. In the meantime, however, the number of expulsions grew where the Majority had control of the industrial federation in question. At the beginning of December, therefore, 14 regional associations and ten industrial federations – all of them dominated by the CSRs – called an extraordinary trade-union congress for 22–24 December ‘with the aim of preventing a split’. For the CGT leadership though, this act itself constituted a split. All the trade unions which took part in this congress, they said, would thereby place themselves outside the CGT and would be considered to have left it.¹⁹⁶

During the next few weeks, the current around *La Vie Ouvrière* tried fruitlessly to prevent the inevitable from happening.¹⁹⁷ Equally unsuccessful was the sudden initiative of the Executive Bureau of the RILU, which turned to the IFTU executive with a proposal to act jointly to ward off the threatened split.¹⁹⁸ But even when the ‘unity congress’ (*Congrès unitaire*, as it described itself) had met, everything still did not seem to be lost. After the first day of the congress, a delegation from the CGT leadership suggested as a compromise proposal that the trade unions controlled by the Minority should immediately leave the CSRs, which would thus be reduced to a collection of individual members, which is what the Majority had always demanded. In return they offered to respect the Minority and reverse the expulsions. But the most important CGT leaders were not in Paris – was this by chance? – and the secretary who was available

196 Labi 1964, pp. 214–20.

197 Labi 1964, p. 221.

198 The exchange of telegrams on this subject between 15 December and 22 January is printed in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 25–7, and in *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January to February 1922, pp. 19–21 and no. 2, March–April 1922, pp. 72–3. Oudegeest replied to the proposal for a meeting by saying that he would be prepared to do this at the beginning of January if Moscow could postpone the congress. Since this telegram did not reach Moscow in time – perhaps Amsterdam only wanted to use the proposal to test whether the Russians continued to have any authority over the CSRs – the congress had meanwhile already taken place in France. Subsequent telegrams consisted simply of mutual reproaches. On 9 February, the Executive Bureau adopted a long resolution in which it concluded that ‘its attempt to prevent a split in the French trade union movement was defeated by the resistance of the reformist leaders of the General Confederation of Labour and the Amsterdam International’ (RGASPI 534/3/23/31–2).

had no mandate to conduct negotiations. After the return of the delegation to the congress, there was a dramatic clash between the different opinions, and each side placed the historical responsibility for the split on the other. With this the split was now an accomplished fact. A provisional leadership was elected to maintain the links between all of the trade unions represented at the congress. It was entirely dominated by 'pure syndicalists' and anarchists.¹⁹⁹ This constellation of political forces also dominated the 'Congress of the Minority' ('*Congrès minoritaire*'), in other words a congress of the CSRs, which took place directly afterwards, and was attended only by the trade-union sections which had previously joined the CSRs. Its range of participants was therefore somewhat narrower than that of the previous '*Congrès unitaire*'.²⁰⁰ An important part was played at the 'Congress of the Minority' by the reports of the delegates who had gone to Moscow (this applied both to the delegation to the RILU founding congress and to Rosmer who had also now returned to France). Given the dominant political attitude of the congress, there were now a series of attacks on the RILU. Wilkens also took part. This provoked fierce protests from Monatte and Rosmer on account of the series of articles he had written about Russia, to which the latter replied by recalling the story of the signatures Borghi and Pestaña were supposed to have appended to a resolution of the ITUC which they had later withdrawn.²⁰¹ The majority of the congress opposed Moscow and declared itself in favour of federalism as the principle on which the trade unions should be organised. A new leadership for the CSRs was also confirmed at the congress. In practice, however, the CSRs had no more significance. In the next few weeks, they were absorbed into the new central trade-union body, which was now established under the name *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire* (CGTU).²⁰²

199 'Le Congrès unitaire de la C.G.T.', *Le Libéraire*, 30 December 1921–6 January 1922, and Labi 1964, pp. 222–7.

200 'Le Congrès minoritaire', *Le Libéraire*, 30 December 1921–6 January 1922.

201 This led to violent press polemics. See A. Rosmer, 'L'Internationale Syndicale Rouge au Congrès des C.S.R.', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 139, 30 December 1921, and Wilkens, 'La preuve des mensonges de Rosmer ou l'escroquerie d'une signature', *Le Libéraire*, 20–27 January 1922.

202 Our task here is limited to presenting the significance of this split for the RILU. There has been much discussion of its place within the long-term development of the French trade-union movement and of how to evaluate the fundamental causes of the split. On these questions, see the attempt at a quantitative and structural treatment in Jean-Louis Robert, *La scission syndicale de 1921. Essai de reconnaissance des formes*, Paris, 1980. See also, by the same author, '1921: la scission fondatrice', *Le Mouvement social*, no. 172, July–

One of the main reasons why the CGT split, rather than being taken over by the revolutionary minority, was that the latter was dominated by the anarchists and the 'pure syndicalists'. The split was against the wishes of the RILU leadership, which ever since the RILU congress had made intensive, but unsuccessful, efforts to persuade the CSRs to avoid this.

As early as the middle of August, some of the syndicalists who had taken the side of the majority in Moscow – Andreytchine, Mann and Nin – had taken the initiative, setting out their position in letters to the organ of the CGT Minority. This position, they said, involved the co-operation of all revolutionaries and by no means implied the subordination of revolutionary syndicalists to the communist party.²⁰³ In the main RILU periodical, Lozovsky once again marshalled all the arguments in favour of co-operation between revolutionary syndicalists and communists, as part of a 'friendly discussion' with the French syndicalists.²⁰⁴ Rosmer too, who no longer possessed a mandate after the RILU congress, and therefore took no further part in the Executive Bureau, returned to France in October and immediately intervened in the discussions in the CSRs, mainly through articles in *La Vie Ouvrière*.²⁰⁵

But all these endeavours failed to have any impact. The fissiparous dynamic could not be overcome. The decisive forces of the Minority varied in their attitude to unity from criticism to outright hostility, and it was impossible to influence them from Moscow. The RILU could therefore do no more than comment from a distance, document its concerns and express the hope that the French Communist Party would itself do what it had not yet done, namely

September 1995, pp. 101–8. It was not just the protagonists who argued over the question of responsibility for the split, right up to the 1950s; it also became an important theme in the historiography of French communism. See on this the appraisal by Jean Charles ('A propos de la scission syndicale de 1921', *Cahiers d'histoire de l'Institut Maurice Thorez*, no. 16, 1976, pp. 326–57). It should be added that as yet there is no detailed treatment available of the history of the CGTU, which lasted for almost fifteen years. There are sketches of its development in Michel Dreyfus, *Histoire de la C.G.T.*, Brussels, 1995, pp. 126–37, 150–1, and 154–62, and in Georges Lefranc, *Le mouvement syndical sous la Troisième République*, Paris, 1967, pp. 266–79, 307–9 and 324–34.

203 Printed in *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 120, 19 August 1921.

204 A. Losowsky, 'Zwei Internationalen (Eine freundschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit den französischen Syndikalisten)', *Die Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 7, October 1921, pp. 8–23. He then made the irritating discovery that the article had not been published in France (see Charles 1978 (2), p. 132).

205 'Après quinze mois de séjour en Russie Rosmer rentre et nous donne ses premières impressions', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 130, 28 October 1921; and A. Rosmer, 'Il faut lire les résolutions de l'Internationale Syndicale Rouge', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 138, 23 December 1921.

use its influence in the trade unions to restrain the influence of the anarchists. It was hoped that the congress due to meet in Marseilles at the end of December 1921 would achieve this feat.²⁰⁶

A curious incidental episode now took place. In autumn 1921, Victor Griffuelhes visited Moscow. As secretary of the CGT from 1901 to 1909, he had stamped revolutionary syndicalism more strongly with his influence than almost anyone else. While in Moscow he made some offers of assistance, though they were rather vague. Admittedly, he had long ago officially withdrawn from any leading position in the CGT, but he had had a background role as the inspiration for the February 1921 'pact' of the 'pure syndicalists'. Did he offer his co-operation to Moscow in return for recognition as a leading personality in the new, revolutionary CGT? This was certainly not an intrigue mounted by Moscow, because the Russian response to his proposals was non-committal. The initiative for the visit seems to have been his and his alone. It was announced that he would produce some articles, which might have been a starting-point for his return to a position of leadership in the CGT, but they never appeared. His death, at the end of June 1922, had no particular impact, and was only noticed in passing.²⁰⁷

206 See A. Losowsky, 'Die französische Gewerkschaftsbewegung vor der Spaltung', and Jules Humbert-Droz, 'Syndikalisten und Kommunisten in Frankreich', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, 15 December 1921, pp. 551–67. (The Swiss communist Humbert-Droz repeatedly visited France at this period in order to promote the views of the Comintern within the PCF, in particular in regard to the establishment of a close alliance with the revolutionary syndicalists). On the relationship between the PCF and the trade unions, see Jean Charles, 'L'intervention du P.C.F. dans les luttes ouvrières (1921)', *Cahiers d'histoire de l'Institut Maurice Thorez*, nos. 8–9, 1974, pp. 280–308, and Wohl 1966, pp. 236–51.

207 The precise circumstances of his visit to Moscow, and who offered what to whom, will remain mysterious unless they can be illuminated by discoveries in the archives. Trotsky informed Rosmer in detail in November about Griffuelhes's visit. His letter (printed in Trotsky 1967, pp. 131–4) only strengthens the impression that Griffuelhes was the active party, and that the Bolsheviks were waiting to see what developed. One effect the visit may possibly have had was to anger Monatte, who suspected, on the basis of Griffuelhes's attitude after his return, that the latter was intriguing against him and that Moscow was going along with this (see on this the note by the editor Pierre Broué in Trotsky 1967, p. 133). The matter also had a personal aspect. On the return journey, Griffuelhes endeavoured to bring a Russian woman with him, who had married one of the delegates to the RILU founding congress in Moscow in August. But she was unable to leave the country as she had no exit visa. Griffuelhes then appealed to Lozovsky from Paris in a personal letter, asking for his help (RGASPI 534/8/4), but Lozovsky does not seem to have replied. (On Griffuelhes's visit to Moscow, see the detailed account in Vandervoort 1996, pp. 235–43).

There continued to be uncertainty about the course events would take after the split in the CGT. This was shown in the discussions in the Executive Bureau. Andreytchine and Humbert-Droz, the representative of the Comintern, who was also present, both hoped that Monatte's effort at mediation would be able to reverse the split. It was agreed that the anarchists should be opposed more strongly. In their view, *La Vie Ouvrière* was not reliable enough to do this.²⁰⁸ A new journal was required. But it was not until the beginning of May that it was possible to bring out the first issue of *La Lutte de Classe*, with its subtitle 'Bulletin of the RILU'. Rosmer, Tommasi and Godonnèche were the editors.

On the one hand, the desire of the CGT leadership to draw a clear line of separation from the Minority proved insurmountable, despite various attempts at mediation,²⁰⁹ while on the other hand the *bloc* of anarchists and 'pure syndicalists' was just as determined to defend its dominant position in the new CGTU against the supporters of affiliation with the RILU. This was demonstrated at the first CCN of the new CGTU, on 5 and 6 March. Against the opposition of the group around *La Vie Ouvrière*, the modalities of representation at the forthcoming CGTU congress were laid down in such a way that vacillating trade unions could not gain entry. The purpose was to compel the trade unions to decide as quickly as possible between the CGT and the CGTU.²¹⁰

In the intervening period, the second session of the RILU's Central Council at the end of February once again appealed to all syndicalists to send delegates to the second RILU congress (for more detail on this point, see below). In the French case, this resulted in an exchange of letters with the new *Commission Administrative* of the CGTU in March and April. The Executive Bureau called on this body to send two representatives to Moscow to discuss the extent of the CGTU's differences with the RILU, in preparation for the next congress. The *Commission Administrative* rejected the suggestion, however. The union was already involved in preparing a meeting of the syndicalist organisations in Berlin, it replied, to which the VTsSPS, although not the RILU, was invited to send a representative.²¹¹ The syndicalist meeting eventually took place in June 1922.

208 RGASPI 534/3/23/6–7 and 48.

209 This was made clear at the *Comité Confédéral National* of the CGT, meeting from 13–15 February 1922. See Julius Horten, 'Der Gnadenstoss', *Inprekorr*, no. 23, 25 February 1922, and V. Godonnèche, 'Die Spaltung der französischen Gewerkschaftsbewegung', *Inprekorr*, no. 27, 7 March 1922.

210 V. Godonnèche, 'Die erste Zusammenkunft der revolutionären C.G.T.', *Inprekorr*, no. 33, 21 March 1922.

211 Excerpts from this letter are printed in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 109–10.

In April, the *Commission Administrative* put forward a draft statute for the CGTU, which established a decentralised, federal structure for the union. The members of its bureau, which constituted the top leadership, were not re-eligible. There were no provisions dealing with the CGTU's international connections. This absence amounted to a refusal to affiliate to the RILU. It was interpreted in this way in Moscow as well, where the Executive Bureau reported on its fundamental differences of opinion with the CGTU leaders.²¹²

The RILU leaders had now to take action, in view of the anarchist offensive and the impending congress of the CGTU (which took place in Saint-Étienne between 25 June and 1 July 1922). It was a severe blow for the RILU when, at the end of December 1921, Monatte resigned from the editorial board of *La Vie Ouvrière*, partly for reasons of ill-health and partly because of political disappointment over the split in the CGT. In addition to this, he remained in the CGT, giving the reason that his own trade union (the union of proofreaders) had decided to stay in it, after taking a vote.²¹³ Lozovsky sent a letter to him expressing his concern at his decision. Soon afterwards, however, Monatte returned to the fray, in reaction to the way things were developing in France. In the spring of 1922, his voice began to be heard again both in *La Vie Ouvrière* and in the communist party newspaper *L'Humanité* in support of the campaign against the anarchists and the 'pure syndicalists'.²¹⁴

For the RILU, everything now depended on whether it would be possible to forge an alliance between the communists and the current around *La Vie Ouvrière*, whose most important spokesman was Monmousseau.²¹⁵ To pave the

212 The draft statute is printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 328–34. (On the reaction of the RILU, see RGASPI 534/3/23/112 and 122, and *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 110–11).

213 Monatte later justified this decision in a lengthy article which also presented his view of the overall development of the CGTU until its first congress (Pierre Monatte, 'Le Syndicalisme est-il mort à Saint-Étienne?', *Clarté*, nos. 18, 15 July 1922 and 19, 12 September 1922).

214 *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 324–5, and 336–47, where Lozovsky's letters to him are printed. See also Charles 1978 (2), p. 130.

215 When he resigned from *La Vie Ouvrière*, Monatte had not transferred the role of chief editor to his close friend Rosmer, because he thought he was too isolated on account of his unconditional support for the RILU, but rather to Monmousseau. He would very much regret this later on, not only because Monmousseau became a leading Stalinist, but also because he was unaware at the time of the latter's inglorious role in the railway strike of 1910. (See M. Chambelland, 'Ce reproche vivant ...', *La Révolution prolétarienne*, no. 46, January 1951, and P.M., 'Les fossoyeurs de la "Vie ouvrière"', *La Révolution prolétarienne*, no. 446, January 1960).

way for this was one of the tasks for which the Comintern sent Humbert-Droz to Paris at the beginning of May. Intensive conversations were held behind the scenes between *La Vie Ouvrière* and the trade-union commission of the PCF led by Tommasi.²¹⁶

On the eve of the congress, the Executive Bureau of the RILU made its position clear in another statement. What was involved here, it said, was by no means the subordination of the trade unions to the party. An organic link between the two, it was now said, was 'desirable' but not 'necessary'. This indicated the kind of compromise the RILU was seeking to achieve. Moreover, the particular conditions of each country would have to be taken into account. In any case, though, the road to a separate syndicalist international would lead to a dead end.²¹⁷

The RILU now sent Lozovsky to France. He arrived in Paris two weeks before the start of the congress, and he familiarised himself thoroughly with the state of the discussion in France.²¹⁸ A tremendous mistake by the anarcho-syndicalists was of great assistance to him and to the other adherents of the RILU. In the middle of June, their paper published the text of the *Pacte* of February 1921 which had deprived the group around *La Vie Ouvrière* of its power in the CSRs. Lozovsky assumed that this was an attempt to steal a march on their opponents by revealing it before they did, because rumours were already circulating about it.²¹⁹ They may have hoped to improve their position by doing so, but precisely the opposite occurred. The publication of

216 These conversations have left few traces behind. Some of the records are collected together in Charles 1978 (2), pp. 130–1. This article also contains a letter of 4 May from Lozovsky to Rosmer (Charles 1978 (2), pp. 131–4). In it he complains bitterly about the PCF's previous failure to exert influence on the CGTU. Not everyone in Moscow was prepared to make concessions to the French syndicalists, however. As Brandler wrote to Lozovsky during the latter's stay in France, Zinoviev was at first firmly opposed to any concessions, and only gave way after a certain amount of debate (RGASPI 534/4/36/3 and 6).

217 'Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale an den Kongress der C.G.T.U.', in Losowsky 1922, pp. 124–31.

218 He composed a series of articles for *Pravda* about his stay in France, which was naturally illegal, and the impressions he had received there. The articles are sometimes amusing, particularly when he describes his disguises, and they were later published as a book (Losowsky 1922). His return to the country where he was only a somewhat obscure delegate at the last prewar congress of the CGT, from which he was more or less deported in 1917, and to which he now returned as a dangerous Bolshevik agitator the police were unable to catch, aroused in him a sense of personal triumph which is also noticeable in these articles.

219 Losowsky 1922, pp. 64–7.

the *Pacte* 'inevitably saddled the libertarians with a conspiratorial image. It also enabled the communists to argue that they were simply advancing their own views in the unions, just as the libertarians had organised themselves to do'.²²⁰

There was now a swing in the mood of many of the delegates: the anarcho-syndicalist *bloc* lost its majority at the congress.²²¹ An alliance led by the group around *La Vie Ouvrière*, headed by Monmousseau, now asserted itself against the anarcho-syndicalists. This group was also supported by the communist delegates, who held a fraction meeting for the first time during the course of the congress, which provoked considerable annoyance on the part of their anarcho-syndicalist opponents. As a result, the resolutions finally adopted bore a compromise character. Monmousseau's resolutions on national and international links and on the new statute obtained solid majorities in each case (779 to 391, 743 to 406 and 743 to 336 respectively, with some abstentions and a number of uninfluential alternative positions). Though it was certainly not decisive for the course of the congress, Lozovsky's sudden appearance was without doubt a success in psychological terms. Despite fierce initial heckling from the anarchist side, he was eventually able to defend the views of the RILU without interruption. The opposing side was represented chiefly by Borghi, and by Galo Díez from the CNT. Borghi took a broad historical sweep, recounting his experiences in 1920 once again, and also bringing up the thesis that Vergeat and Lepetit had been murdered by the Bolsheviks, and arguing for the establishment of an independent international. Lozovsky remarked tartly that while he himself had to appear illegally, there were obvious reasons why Borghi was able to move around in complete legality.

The atmosphere of the discussions about international matters was also influenced by the reproach levelled against the French delegates at the preliminary international conference of syndicalists held in Berlin in the middle of June to the effect that they had gone beyond their mandate. Instead of refusing

²²⁰ Thorpe 1989, pp. 310–11.

²²¹ On the course of the congress, see the minutes, *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire. Ier Congrès tenu à Saint-Étienne du 25 Juin au 1er Juillet 1922*, Paris, 1922. There are several contemporary accounts: Losowsky 1922, pp. 74–116; the letters which a close friend wrote to Monatte, who was not present at the congress, informing him of events, and which are printed in *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 347–50; Monatte's own account (Monatte 1922); and Alfred Rosmer, 'Le congrès de Saint-Étienne. Pour l'unité, pour l'action dans l'I.S.R.', *La lutte de classe*, no. 5, 5 July 1922. Compare also the later studies by Thorpe 1989, pp. 226–35, Wohl 1966, pp. 282–4, and Charles 1978 (2), pp. 134–64.

to commit themselves, since the CGTU had not yet made any decision about its international orientation, they had completely accepted the objective of the meeting, which was to establish a body that would compete with the RILU. They had admittedly not taken part in any votes, but they had taken over the running of some discussions, which meant that they were no longer simple observers.

The resolution on the international adopted by the CGTU congress was not of a nature to satisfy the RILU completely. The CGTU did agree to send delegates to the next congress, but it only foresaw conditional membership, which would depend on a change in the RILU's statutes. The original formulation of the resolution, according to which the CGTU would submit to the decision of the RILU congress, whatever it was, was changed, and now it read that a refusal to change the RILU's statutes would mean that the whole question of membership would have to be discussed again. This made it possible to win over a number of wavering syndicalists. A counter-resolution had demanded participation in the syndicalist congress called by the Berlin preliminary conference, but this was rejected. (Even the counter-resolution offered a compromise, whereby the union would take part in both international congresses; it was, however, clear to all the delegates where the main stress in each resolution lay).

The newly elected CGTU leadership was now led by the group around *La Vie Ouvrière*, with Monmousseau as general secretary. Nevertheless, two independent syndicalists were included alongside two representatives of *La Vie Ouvrière* in the bureau of four, so as to place it on a broader basis. On the other hand, it was clear that the struggle had not come to an end. The anarchists and 'pure syndicalists' now set up a *Comité de Défense Syndicaliste*, which agitated for the absolute independence of the trade unions (from the communist party) and for the establishment of a syndicalist international.

In view of the overall circumstances, the RILU could doubtless be satisfied with the outcome of the congress. After hearing a detailed report from Lozovsky, the Executive Bureau noted that the congress had preferred to make an alliance with a living revolution rather than to stick to scholastic formulae. It was important, it said, that Monmousseau or some other CGTU representative had been instructed by the congress to deliver a report on the relationship between the RILU and the Comintern at the next RILU congress. Admittedly, the Executive Bureau had not yet made a definite decision to revise its old resolution. But the events in France had justified the decision made earlier to proceed with the formation of a *bloc* with the revolutionary syndicalists and to take into account the prevailing national conditions, where a significant syndicalist trade union existed. The Executive Bureau also expressed its hope that the newly formed syndicalist opposition in the CGTU (the *Comité*

de Défense Syndicaliste) would alter its opinions on the basis of its experiences in the common struggle.²²²

When 31 of the CGTU's representatives approached the Executive Bureau of the RILU in September, calling on it to support a change in the statutes, the latter responded by saying that there were good reasons why the congress should not be faced with a *fait accompli*, however adding that it was still ready to support a compromise with the syndicalists.²²³ The ground was thereby marked out on which an agreement could be reached with the CGTU at the forthcoming RILU congress, and the affiliation of the CGTU gave the RILU 'solid prospects of becoming a genuine international'.²²⁴

In view of the decisions that had been made in the national organisations, the international level was now of secondary importance for the RILU. At its second session at the end of February, the Central Council discussed its relationship with the syndicalists and once again confirmed in a resolution that its aim was to unite together communists and syndicalists in the RILU. It warned against the intention of forming a syndicalist international which had been expressed at the FAUD congress and it appealed to syndicalists to take part in the second RILU congress instead. But most of the syndicalist organisations stayed away from the Central Council session. The only organisation to take part, apart from communist-controlled ones like the UdHuK, was the NAS, which had sent a delegation. Even that was split.²²⁵

222 RGASPI 534/3/23/150-1 and *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 45. Lozovsky expressed himself somewhat more vigorously about the *Comité de Défense Syndicaliste* in a letter to Monatte. They should attack it 'with bayonets', he wrote. Every issue of the communists' newspapers must utter bitter verities. The struggle would be easier if the hostile organism had no opportunity to take shape (*Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 351-2).

223 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 46-7.

224 Charles 1978 (2), p. 129.

225 There is very little information available about this session of the Central Council. Its minutes were not published, and there are no notes of the proceedings preserved in the RILU archive (see section 3 of this chapter). The references to the Central Council's discussions in articles published in the Comintern press are also extremely scanty. The NAS delegation, however, did publish a report, which deals for the most part with this item of the agenda. According to this document, the main speeches were delivered by Nin and Andreytchine. The speeches of Brandler and Lozovsky are also summarised, and finally those of Lansink and Bouwman (*Rapport delegatie N.A.S.* n.d.). The resolution itself was printed as: 'Die revolutionären Syndikalistinnen und die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, p. 234. At the end of 1922, at the second RILU congress, Nin summarised Lansink's remarks like this: 'It was impossible for

It took some time before the resolution of the October 1921 congress of the FAUD to call an international conference could be put into practice. Negotiations went on behind the scenes about the basis on which it should be summoned – whether in direct opposition to the RILU, as had been proclaimed in Düsseldorf, or with an offer to reach a last-minute compromise – and where it should be held. After the CGTU had been set up, its provisional bureau took the initiative and in March 1922 it made an agreement during the meeting of the USI congress for the conference to be held in Paris. Since the CGTU's decision on its international orientation had not yet been made, however, the union was finally compelled to propose a shift from Paris to Berlin. Only in Berlin would it be possible for Russian representatives to take part.²²⁶ The political direction that the syndicalist conference would take was made clear shortly beforehand by an 'International Bulletin of Revolutionary Syndicalists and Industrialists' published by the organising bureau. Its articles, which were in part fundamental statements of principle, in part reports from various countries, all expressed the same credo: there can be no common political basis with the RILU, and we need an international of our own.

The conference (or pre-conference, as it was also called) met in Berlin from 16–19 June 1922.²²⁷ It was attended by representatives from the FAUD, the CGTU, whose mandate was restricted to observer status, for which reason its delegates did not vote, but did take part otherwise with full rights, which subsequently

us to get a single clear statement out of him. I remember that I said to him: "Comrade *Lansing* [sic! R.T.], the least one can demand of a revolutionary is honesty. We are opposed to secret diplomacy, not only in foreign policy but also in our workers' policy" ... I went on to ask him: "Are you in favour of creating a new international or not?" He stubbornly refused to give a definite answer, however. This kind of attitude is unfortunately contagious, and it is influencing the whole of the Dutch trade union movement' (*Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale. Die Frage der wechselseitigen Beziehungen zwischen der RGI und der KI auf dem 2. Kongress der RGI. Stenogramme der Reden der Genossen Nin, Monmousseau, Tresso und Sinowjew*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 16–17).

226 See the details in the *Rapport moral* of the provisional bureau, printed in *Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire. Ier Congrès 1922*, pp. 11–12. In practice, though, the provisional bureau wanted to set conditions which would inevitably provoke a break with the RILU. This point was made from the communist side, backed up with appropriate quotations, at the Saint-Étienne congress (*Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire. Ier Congrès 1922*, pp. 148–9).

227 Detailed minutes were published in *Bulletin international des syndicalistes révolutionnaires et industrialistes*, no. 2/3, August 1922, and also in 'Die internationale Konferenz der revolutionären Syndikalisten', *Der Syndikalist*, no. 25, 1922. See also Thorpe 1989, pp. 219–26.

led to criticism at Saint-Étienne, the SAC, whose delegates also represented the Norwegian syndicalists, the USI, the Russian syndicalists, who had been deported from Soviet Russia in the meantime, and the Dutch syndicalist seamen's organisation. The CNT delegation did not arrive at the conference until towards the end. Apart from this a representative of the VTsSPS was also present for part of the time as an observer. A number of other organisations (the IWW, the NAS and the CGT[P]) reported that they were unable to send any delegates for various reasons.

The first day of the conference was entirely devoted to the preliminaries (the assignment of mandates and the establishment of an agenda). On the second day, however, there was an immediate clash of views when a Russian syndicalist described the persecution in Russia and proposed a resolution of solidarity. That provoked a fierce protest by the representative of the VTsSPS, Andreev. Although it was possible to transfer this proposal to a committee, another issue now led to an open outbreak of hostilities. Representatives from the *Schiffahrtsbund*, the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain, and the Vecchi faction of the USI demanded to be admitted, at least with a consultative status. This was rejected by a large majority as the two German organisations belonged to the RILU – hence were not independent – and the Vecchi faction had broken the discipline of the USI. In reply to this, Andreev also left the conference, followed by the correspondent of *La Vie Ouvrière*.²²⁸

228 See Maurice Chambelland, 'La Conférence de Berlin' and 'Une déclaration de la Centrale Syndicale Russe et des "Exclus"', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 164, 23 June 1922, as well as 'Über die internationale Konferenz der SyndikalistInnen', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 29, 29 July 1922. The Executive Bureau of the RILU had in fact decided not to send a representative to this conference (RGASPI 534/3/23/126 and 129). A manifesto against the conference, drafted by Nin, was published. It recalled the numerous invitations that had been made to syndicalist organisations to send representatives to Moscow, but it also drew attention to the resolution of the Central Council of the RILU and expressed the hope that the Second RILU Congress would clear up all differences of opinion ('An alle revolutionären syndikalistischen Organisationen', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 404–5). The ECCI presidium, on the other hand, had decided in favour of participation, in other words, in its formulation, it had made the appropriate recommendation to 'the Russian comrades' (*Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Präsidiums und der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale für die Zeit vom 6. März bis 11. Juni 1922*, Hamburg, 1922, p. 73). Something of a conflict developed on this occasion between the RILU and the VTsSPS, because the latter followed the ECCI recommendation and named a delegation of three people (RGASPI 95/1/27/150). In doing this it disregarded the decision of the Executive Bureau, as Brandler reported critically in a letter to Lozovsky, who was in France (RGASPI 534/4/36/3), although as a trade union it was subject not to the discipline

The delegates who remained behind were largely in agreement. This pre-conference could now transact the items on its agenda without being diverted by any further controversies. It accepted a declaration of syndicalist principles put forward by Rocker, directed against the dictatorship of the proletariat and in favour of the independence of the revolutionary trade unions; it issued a call for the construction of a syndicalist international, though the concession was made to the French that the founding syndicalist congress would take place after the Second RILU Congress had been held, so as to allow the RILU a last chance to change its mind; and it put in place a bureau to prepare the founding congress, consisting of Rocker, Borghi, Pestaña, Jensen and Shapiro.

This bureau immediately approached the RILU, on 1 July, inviting it to take part in the planned syndicalist congress. The RILU refused the invitation, referring to the experience the VTsSPS representative had just had in Berlin. In the middle of August, the bureau repeated its appeal to the RILU in a long letter. The international syndicalist congress had been deliberately set to take place after the RILU congress, it was pointed out. It must be possible to be part of an international in which each country was entitled to adopt its own special form of organisation. The second refusal arrived by return of post.²²⁹ These rejections by the organisation were given a theoretical accompaniment by a series of articles mainly by Nin, who now functioned for the RILU as its spokesman in the dispute with syndicalism, with the prestige attaching to a former

of the Comintern but to that of the RILU. The Comintern's instructions even referred to the possibility of making certain concessions along the same lines as Lozovsky would suggest at Saint-Étienne (RGASPI 534/3/36/3). But these differences were only of a tactical nature. There can hardly have been any difference of opinion over the objective of opposing the syndicalists' drive for independence. In any case, when Lozovsky passed through Berlin on his way back to Russia, he agreed with the Russian delegates that they should 'make a noisy exit from the conference' (Brandler mentioned this in a further letter to Lozovsky (RGASPI 534/4/36/11). The MEB had also resolved that the Union and the *Schiffahrtsbund* should instruct their representatives to prevent the foundation of a syndicalist international, as Heckert later reported at a meeting of the RGZ of the KPD (SAPMO I 2/708/9)). Without any doubt, both the RILU and the ECCI considered the spectrum of opinion represented at the Berlin conference – first and foremost the Russian anarcho-syndicalists – as uninteresting, that is to say irrecoverable. In any case, the elements of their mass base which might be susceptible to persuasion could be approached by fractional work on a national level.

229 The correspondence is printed in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, August 1922, pp. 541–2 and no. 9, September 1922, pp. 595–6. See also RGASPI 534/3/23/165 and the remarks of George Hardy in his article 'Rudolf Rocker écrit à Lozovsky', *La lutte de classe*, no. 10, 25 September 1922.

secretary of the CNT. For him, the plans being made in Berlin to found a syndicalist international reflected the sectarian views of dogmatists, who represented 'pure principles'. He set against these the 'international of the deed' which was the RILU.²³⁰ At the same time, in a letter to a leading Madrid anarchist, Mauro Bajatierra, he admitted that the Bolsheviks had made numerous mistakes and committed injustices (for example, in persecuting the anarchists, though many people had given themselves this title), and that the introduction of the NEP placed the fate of the revolution in grave danger. But a revolution had not been made anywhere else in the world. 'One has to condemn or accept the whole thing *en bloc*, one has to be for or against the Russian revolution, which, whatever one may say, is the revolution of the communist party ...'.²³¹

Neither theoretic-political arguments of this kind, nor the effects of the CGTU's abandonment of the project (its representatives at the Second RILU Congress in November 1922 were able to force through the change in its statutes they had insistently demanded and the union therefore finally turned away from the plan to create a separate syndicalist international) were able to prevent the organisers in Berlin from founding their own international at the end of the year. It was given the name International Working Men's Association (IWMA), in homage to the First International.²³² Without the French syndicalists – only a minority of whom took part in the congress – it lacked a mass basis, although it was represented in a large number of European countries and part of Latin America as well. All these smaller syndicalist unions, however, were in a minority in comparison with both 'Amsterdam' and 'Moscow', and most of them had passed the zenith of their influence, even if they were happy to claim

230 'Die Syndikalisten und die Internationale (Zu einem in Deutschland ausgeheckten Plan)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 2, 1 February 1922, pp. 96–7; 'Kindisches Spiel', no. 8, August 1922, pp. 502–4; and 'Der revolutionärer Syndikalismus und die internationale Organisation des revolutionären Proletariats', no. 11, November 1922, pp. 721–5. Nin also wrote a number of articles on the syndicalist organisations of various countries. They were reprinted in communist press organs all over the world. Like Nin, Tom Mann also brought to bear the whole of his prestige in appealing to the syndicalists, in his case the syndicalists of the English-speaking countries. See, for example, Tom Mann, 'From Syndicalism to Communism', *Labour Monthly*, no. 4, 1922, pp. 205–11. In this article he criticised the way the syndicalists restricted their activities to the economic struggle and ignored the state. He stressed the need to destroy the capitalist state (which was an objective held in common by the communists and the syndicalists). See Tsuzuki 1991, p. 207.

231 'Carta de Andreu Nin a Mauro Bajatierra', *Revista de historia moderna y contemporanea*, no. 1, 1980, pp. 25–31.

232 See the detailed presentation of the founding congress of the IWMA and the discussion of its influence and the subsequent developments in Thorpe 1989, pp. 244–68.

gigantic membership figures. In Spain alone did the syndicalists retain a big influence, through the CNT, as was to be demonstrated after the end of the monarchy and the fall of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship. This did not, however, mean that the *international organisation* of syndicalism made any kind of breakthrough. What happened in a politico-ideological sense was that the currents which now joined together in the IWMA in explicit opposition to communism and in organisational competition with it developed away from the revolutionary syndicalism of the prewar period, which still kept its distance from all 'politico-philosophical schools of thought', towards anarcho-syndicalism, and that the revolutionary trade-union practice of syndicalism now entered into a close connection with anarchism, even in organisational terms.²³³

On the other hand, both the origin of the RILU and the form the organisation took were essentially determined by debates and discussions with the syndicalists. In that context, the RILU had not been able to prevent a large number of syndicalist groups from turning away from it, and with the exception of France, where the CGTU of course became a veritable bastion of the RILU in Western Europe, it only won over minorities, even if they did comprise highly skilled cadres who were to play an outstanding role in the communism of later years, not without good reason. Thus the communists' deep involvement with syndicalism in the early years hardly turned out in the final analysis to lead to the great breakthrough which appeared to be on the horizon during 1918 and 1919, the years of revolutionary optimism. The fact that the anarcho-syndicalist forces

233 See on this Arthur Lehning, 'Du syndicalisme révolutionnaire à l'anarchosyndicalisme – la naissance de l'Association Internationale des Travailleurs de Berlin', *Ricerche storica*, no. 1, January–April 1981, pp. 105–29. In the same issue of this journal, on pp. 29–81, there is also a contribution by Antonio Elorga, who has investigated the interaction between anarchists and syndicalists in the CNT between 1919 and 1938. The role played in this whole development by anarchist groups, which after all existed alongside the revolutionary syndicates, has still hardly been researched. In the controversies over whether to join the RILU, the supporters of the RILU again and again held up before the advocates of 'trade union autonomy' the resolutions passed by anarchist conferences in which they called for consistent work to be carried on in the revolutionary trade unions to ward off Moscow's influence. This sort of thing, they said, was nothing other than anarchist fractional activity and on this level it did not differ from what the communists wanted to do. This line of argument was used, to quote just one example, by Monmousseau at the CGTU congress, and he produced a number of quotations to justify it (*CGTU. Ier Congrès 1922*, pp. 187–8). An international anarchist congress, which took place between 25 December 1921 and 2 January 1922 in Berlin, dealt with the fundamentals of the relationship between anarchism and the trade-union movement. Detailed reports of the proceedings were printed in issues of *Le Libéraire* from 20–27 January until 17–24 February 1922, and in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 1, 1922.

could also boast of very little success did not change this situation. For some communist parties, certainly, and particularly for their trade-union sections, the winning over of syndicalist groupings was of outstanding significance, but for the fate of the RILU what was happening where the great mass of organised workers was to be found, namely in the ranks of the IFTU, was ultimately far more decisive.

3 **The Development of the RILU as an Organisation and a Political Entity: From the First to the Second Congress**

The Executive Bureau elected at the first session of the Central Council after the founding congress of the RILU took up its task immediately. In doing this it relied on the apparatus of the ITUC as its basic structure. The Sections which had been at the heart of the ITUC were now redistributed among the members of the bureau. Arlandis was given the Latin countries, Maier Central Europe, and Andreytchine and Tom Mann were jointly responsible with the existing section chief for the English-speaking countries. The work of organising the IPCs was provisionally transferred to Lozovsky, until Nogin could take over. Some days later a Baltic-Scandinavian subsection was set up, reflecting the strong influence the RILU expected to have in that area.²³⁴

These geographically arranged sections were to serve as the central instrument of control used by the RILU right up to the final phase of the organisation. It was their task to collect and make use of information,²³⁵ and above all to operate from the top down, and to give instructions to the RILU's adherents in the trade-union movements of each country. The structure of the remainder of the RILU apparatus can be seen from a scheme of reorganisation which was adopted on 13 March 1922 by the Executive Bureau, after its existing structure had been subjected to strong criticism following the first congress.²³⁶ According to this new structure, the Communications Service (which established secret contacts abroad, among other tasks) was subordinated directly to the General Secretary (Lozovsky). In addition to this, there were departments for economic administration and information (a press office and a library), an editing and

²³⁴ RGASPI 534/3/9/3 and 22.

²³⁵ The Sections constantly produced internal information sheets and bulletins. These are to be found in large numbers in the RILU archive, but they were also used as a basis for articles in RILU publications.

²³⁶ RGASPI 534/3/9/43, and RGASPI 534/3/23/56–7 and 61–2. There were further reorganisations of the apparatus in later years.

publishing department, and finally an organisation department, which was responsible above all for the IPCs. Each of these major departments was headed by a member of the Executive Bureau.

The apparatus envisaged by this scheme of organisation did not differ to any great degree from that already developed for the ITUC. After all, what was involved here was the creation of a centralised international leadership for the RILU, in line with the Bolshevik conception of the party. Its task was to give direct instructions for the conduct of specific economic struggles and it therefore had to rest on a fully developed organisation, and that ultimately meant an apparatus.

There are very few precise indications of its size, but those we do have allow it to be estimated approximately. A financial statement for November 1922 (before the second congress) refers to 45 technical employees. At the end of 1921, Lozovsky asked the Comintern to organise the distribution of 120 rations for all employees.²³⁷ One can therefore assume that the number of staff was roughly the same as in the case of the ITUC.

The shortage of suitable cadres was certainly a problem. Boris Izakov, one of those concerned, writes in his memoirs about the circumstances in which he was brought into the RILU apparatus, at least temporarily. He had been elected in the spring of 1921 at the age of 18 to the Central Committee of the Woodworkers' Trade Union as a youth representative. It was intended that he would become qualified for international work (by learning French and German, among other things). As a Russian delegate to the first RILU congress, he took part in the establishment of the Woodworkers' IPC, and he was then assigned by Lozovsky to lead the organisation department for the IPCs. He was the only member of the department at that time, as he wrote later.²³⁸

At the beginning of October 1921, Lozovsky sent a long letter to the Politbureau of the RCP. In it he described the political situation of the RILU, standing as it did between syndicalists and 'opportunists' (the Italians and the Norwegians), and he requested that qualified cadres be assigned to the organisation, as well as more money, in particular foreign currency for its work abroad, and even two motor vehicles.²³⁹ The Politbureau discussed these matters on 10 October

237 RGASPI 534/8/4 and 18.

238 Boris Izakov, *V Nash Romanticheskii Vek. Dvadtsatye, Tridtsatye, Sorokovye*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 9–10 and 16–17. Admittedly, he didn't feel up to this task, and he returned to the Woodworkers' Central Committee after a few months. Even so, he was active in the MEB in 1922–3.

239 RGASPI 534/8/5/7–11 or 5/2/227/6–10. A similar letter was sent to the bureau of the communist fraction in the VTsSPS on 8 October 1921 (RGASPI 95/1/22/150).

and instructed the Orgbureau to seek out suitable provincial cadres jointly with the bureau of the communist fraction in the VTsSPS.²⁴⁰ The RILU became more active after this, so one may assume that this instruction was put into effect.

There are obvious reasons why it was difficult to find appropriate personnel for the RILU. The candidates needed to have had experience in the international workers' movement, which in the Soviet context was rarely the case. Suitable cadres were mostly working in other institutions which were more important and had already been in existence for a long time. Moreover, the living conditions in Russia were still too difficult – not to mention many other problems associated with this situation – for it to be possible to bring in staff from abroad in large numbers. Heckert, who was temporarily employed in the Executive Bureau, described how things were in a letter of October 1921 to the KPD's trade-union section: ice-cold rooms, inadequate food, excessively expensive theatre tickets and no opportunity to visit museums, since they were only open during working hours.²⁴¹ Thus the Executive Bureau repeatedly had to attend to questions of daily life, in order to protect the material situation of its staff, and in particular to supply food to them. On 15 September 1921, it decided to set up a canteen. If food supplies were not assigned to it, they would be purchased on the open market. If even that did not prove successful, the staff would be paid in money (foreign currency?).²⁴² With the introduction of the NEP and the stabilisation of the economy during 1922, there was no longer a need for such extraordinary measures. The Executive Bureau was able, as early as the end of March, to take steps to introduce contract-based wage payments in line with trade-union rules.²⁴³

240 Vladimir Il'ich Lenin. *Biograficheskaya Khronika*, vol. 11, 1980, p. 459 and V.A. Kuz'ko, 'V.I. Lenin i sozdanie Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov – Profintern (1920–1922 g.)', in *Bor'ba klassov i sovremennyi mir*, Moscow, 1970, pp. 148–80, here p. 179.

241 SAPMO I 2/798/45. See also Helga and Hansgeorg Meyer, *Fritz Heckert. Lebensbild eines Zeitgenossen*, Berlin-GDR, 1988, p. 242.

242 RGASPI 534/3/9/93.

243 RGASPI 534/3/23/80. The Executive Bureau sometimes had to worry about matters that were entirely prosaic and seemingly banal. Thus the RILU ordered items of clothing from the VTsSPS on 28 October 1921 for personnel who had been given foreign assignments. Izakov has described the background to this request: his employers in the Executive Bureau looked him up and down critically when he was about to travel to Berlin for an IPC meeting. He always wore a leather jacket, whether it was winter or summer, because 'that was the fashion in those revolutionary years'. His status would be obvious to any spy in the West, it was objected. He would have to be given fresh clothing ... of American origin (Izakov 1977, pp. 17–18, and RGASPI 534/3/15/4).

We can do no more than speculate about the way the 'subordinate' personnel fluctuated, especially in the sphere of technical organisation, as these matters have left behind no trace in the RILU archive, but we are much better informed about the upper levels of the organisation. The Executive Bureau was constantly appointing new section or department heads.²⁴⁴ These changes in turn were caused by the extraordinary degree of fluctuation at the top, in the composition of the Executive Bureau itself. It only met for a few days in the exact form in which it had been elected by the Central Council, and the seventh place, which had been reserved for a syndicalist from France or Italy, was never taken up. By the end of July, Nogin had ceased to attend regularly, subsequently surfacing only sporadically²⁴⁵ until he was replaced at the end of October by the Russian trade unionist Dogadov, who was in turn replaced later by Mel'nichansky. Maier returned to Germany in September, Mann returned to Great Britain and Arlandis went back to Spain in the following month. Then Heinrich Brandler, who had had to flee Germany, took over the 'German seat' until August 1922. Béla Kun and Heckert were briefly detached by the ECCI in the autumn of 1921 to keep the work going in these circumstances, although Heckert in fact soon returned to Germany. Andreytchine became seriously ill in March and had to stop work.²⁴⁶ Numerous other foreign communists who were currently staying in Moscow for varying periods of time repeatedly took part in sittings when their own country was under discussion (as in the case of Sneevliet, who came to Moscow in the autumn of 1922 to report on his delegation to China). Other occasional participants were James P. Cannon and Max Bedacht from the CPUSA, and Antonio Gramsci and Pietro Tresso from the PCI.²⁴⁷

One permanent member of the RILU leadership was added. This was Nin. He had, it is true, gone to Berlin in September 1921 to work in the Central European

244 For example, RGASPI 534/3/9/3, 39–40, 43 and 194; RGASPI 534/3/23/61–2.

245 The relationship between Lozovsky and Nogin does not appear to have been very good, although his removal from RILU work would certainly have had weightier grounds of a political nature. Izakov writes that: 'S. A. Lozovsky liked to give long speeches, and since he frequently translated his own speeches into French as well, the sittings took on the character of monologues. This made the irritable Nogin ... furious. The small, nimble and tribune-like Lozovsky, and the tall, unbending Nogin were to a certain extent antipodes, and their pointed remarks against each other soon took on a chronic character' (Izakov 1977, pp. 16–17).

246 RGASPI 534/3/23/64 and 81.

247 The names of participants in each sitting are recorded in the minutes of decisions by the Executive Bureau. For this period, see RGASPI 534/3/9 and 23.

Bureau. There are no documents to determine whether he was expected after that to travel back to Spain illegally. In any case, he was betrayed soon after his arrival by a spy who had wormed his way into the KPD, and arrested as a result. The Spanish government demanded his extradition as being allegedly responsible for the assassination in March 1921 of Prime Minister Dato; Nin had at that time been the secretary of the CNT National Committee. After an extensive solidarity campaign, which was supported by both the Social Democrats and some sections of liberal public opinion, he was released early in January and deported to Soviet Russia. Any hope of a legal return to Spain was now definitely at an end. He joined the Executive Bureau immediately after his arrival in Moscow, and from then on he was the closest colleague and representative of Lozovsky and the second most important leader of the RILU, until his expulsion at the beginning of 1928 for belonging to the Trotskyist opposition.²⁴⁸ It is unclear, however, whether he received a direct mandate

248 Nin himself described the circumstances of his arrest in Berlin during his interrogation by the Stalinist secret police in Spain, after being seized in June 1937 by the Stalinists along with the rest of the leaders of the POUM, and before he was murdered. The minutes taken of these interrogations then surfaced as part of the evidence in the trial of the POUM at the end of 1938 and were subsequently copied. They are printed in *El Proceso del P.O.U.M. Documentos judiciales y policiales*, Barcelona, 1989, pp. 18–28, here pp. 25–6. It emerges from the context of these statements that the intention was to bring Nin to the point of confessing, in line with the usual model of Stalinist accusations, that as a result of this and previous arrests he had become a police spy. On the solidarity campaign for Nin, see R. Albert [Victor Serge], ‘Sauvons Andrés Nin et Ortiz’, *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 133, 18 November 1921, ‘Schützt Spaniens Revolutionäre’, *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 520, 12 November 1921, and ‘Rettet die spanischen Arbeiter’, *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 42, 5 January 1922. The intention of the assassination of Dato was to counter the campaign of extermination waged against the CNT in Barcelona (which had often led to actual executions of trade unionists by the police according to the principle expressed in the phrase ‘Shot while attempting to escape’). The deed was done by three anarchists from the Metalworkers’ Trade Union. On the background to this events, see Meaker (1974, pp. 340–1) and Bar (1981, pp. 566–7). Nin and the communist-sindicalist tendency fought hard against the revolutionary counter-terror propagated by large sections of the anarchist movement, but the responsibility for it was placed on him by the government because he was the secretary of the CNT. He gave a detailed account of his views at the time, writing as follows: ‘As supporters of violent mass action, we question the efficacy of individual actions. We always advise against them ... We are no longer able to justify gestures by individuals. Their revolutionary significance is more than doubtful, but they follow as an inevitable consequence from the policy of the authorities. Dato’s policy was fated to bring him to his tragic end. He was not murdered; he committed suicide’ (‘Pourquoi Dato fut assassiné’, *La lutte de classe*, no. 4, 20 June 1921 and no. 5, 5 July 1921). One of the leading participants in the CNT action groups, Juan García

from the CNT to enter the Executive Bureau or simply replaced Arlandis, the CNT representative who had originally been elected to the bureau, but had subsequently returned to Spain, having been recalled in November 1921 by the CNT leadership (see section 2 of this chapter). The minutes of the first Executive Bureau sitting in which he participated do not contain any material on this point.²⁴⁹

Lozovsky had continued to be the leading embodiment of personal continuity in the organisation ever since the founding of the ITUC. He drove the development of the RILU forward with great organisational dexterity and tremendous application. Lenin, for instance, held him up to Zinoviev as an example in a letter of 28 July 1921. Lozovsky, he said, had already issued the resolutions of the founding congress of the RILU nine days after it ended: 'What a splendid fellow [*Vot molodets!*]'.²⁵⁰

But the same man soon afterwards had the experience of being replaced by Rudzutak as General Secretary of the RILU, at a meeting of the Politbureau on 23 February 1922. He was, however, allowed to remain a member of the

Oliver, claimed in his memoirs (Oliver 1978, pp. 625–6) that Nin was present at the decision to assassinate Dato, but he does not give any proof of this. In any case, even some of Oliver's old comrades in the struggle reproached him after his memoirs had appeared for having been guided by a 'factional spirit' in much of what he said. A different account is given by Bueso (1976, pp. 139–48). He writes that the organisation did not officially decide on the assassination, but many of its leaders agreed that it should be done. He does not, however, give any names. One of the three assassins was arrested in Madrid, another was finally able to flee to Soviet Russia, while the third was arrested in Berlin, some days after Nin. Rumours were soon spread around that Nin had betrayed him (see RGASPI 534/3/23/79 and Nin's statement in *La Lucha social*, no. 106, 15 April 1922).

249 This was the sitting of 18 January 1922 (RGASPI 534/3/23/15). It has been alleged that in the previous autumn, when Arlandis's seat became vacant, so to speak, Maurín had attempted to assign the representation of the CNT in the Executive Bureau to Ramón Casanellas, the member of the Dato assassination team who had just managed to reach Moscow (see *Congresos anarcosindicalistas en España 1870–1936*, Toulouse-Paris 1977, p. 90).

250 V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, 5th edn., vol. 53, Moscow, 1965, p. 75. The next passage is likely to have pleased Zinoviev even less: 'And what about you?? Appoint *a person to be responsible* for editing, and get Lozovsky to publish the resolutions of the Third Congress of the Communist International' (this congress had ended seven days before the RILU congress). Lozovsky's great organisational abilities were also noticed by many foreign communists. We have quoted Foster's impression of the way in which the RILU congress was conducted (see chapter 4, section 1). And this was the verdict of the KPD leader Maslow: 'Lozovsky [is] energetic and he is a good bureaucratic organiser, a quality which is rare in Russia' ('Losowski – Schmied, Volkskommissar, "Rebbe" [11 Juli 1941]', in Lübke (ed.) 1990, p. 409).

Executive Bureau.²⁵¹ The minutes of the meeting do not give any reasons for this. There are also no background materials, so that one can only hypothesise about the context in which this happened.

In part his removal was an unintended consequence of his own push to secure adequate Russian representation in the Executive Bureau. The Politbureau had already sent his request to the communist fraction of the VTsSPS in the middle of September for examination, presumably because of the withdrawal of Nogin. Lozovsky himself then asked the presidium of the VTsSPS on 16 January to appoint a Russian representative to the bureau at long last, in view of the approaching session of the Central Council. The next day, the communist fraction's own bureau discussed the matter, followed a week later by the party's Politbureau. Finally, at a sitting of the communist fraction's bureau at the end of January, a detailed proposal was crystallised: Lozovsky and Dogadov would sit on the Executive Bureau, while Mel'nichansky and the head of the metalworkers' trade union Kozelev would go to the Central Council. The name of Rudzutak was also brought up at this point, but this still had to be clarified with the VTsSPS.²⁵²

The grounds for the appointment of the latter some weeks later as General Secretary may have been as follows: Rudzutak came from the highest Bolshevik leadership circle, to which Lozovsky did not belong, partly because of his position in 1917. In the eyes of the Politbureau, therefore, he was certainly a more appropriate leader of an international than Lozovsky. After all, the latter owed his exclusive leadership role until then to an accident of history rather than to his obvious experience and ability. In actual fact, he had not even been considered for the ITUC when it was founded, but was only brought in on the insistence of Tomsky, who wanted his burden to be lightened, although he did gain prestige in the meantime through his public appearances in Germany. He only played a role in organising the founding congress of the RILU, with entirely satisfactory results as far as the Bolsheviks were concerned, thanks to the removal of Tomsky from office in May as a result of the trade-union debate. The consequence of this, however, was that the job of running the trade-union international then fell to him. Another possible reason for the Politbureau's decision of 23 February was that it was part of a reshuffle of the whole leading group in the trade-union movement, since Tomsky had been rehabilitated for higher leadership functions in the meantime and had returned from Turkestan at the beginning of 1922.²⁵³

251 RGASPI 17/3/271. Stalin and Molotov were directed to speak to him about this.

252 RGASPI 95/1/27/5-9.

253 On the reinstatement of Rudzutak and Tomsky in connection with the change in the tasks

What Rudzutak completely lacked, however, was international experience and an international profile. This decision, and the whole way of arriving at it, would certainly have been grist to the mill of the RILU's anarcho-syndicalist opponents if it had become publicly known. In any case, it was resolutely opposed by the non-Russian members of the RILU leadership. Moreover, it had been made in the middle of the second session of the Central Council. A group of Western European RILU leaders (Nin, Brandler, Walcher, Andreytchine and Rosmer) therefore sent a letter to the CC of the RCP (b) on 2 March. The grounds for the decision were not known, they said. But such a young organisation as the RILU could not withstand constant changes at the top. Lozovsky had gained much experience during his period in office, and this would now go to waste. Moreover, out of all the Russian trade-union leaders, he was the one who had showed the greatest understanding of international requirements. Both Amsterdam and the anarchists, who constantly attacked him, would paint his removal as a victory. A copy of the letter was sent to Lenin, with a postscript from Brandler begging him to use all his influence in favour of Lozovsky.²⁵⁴

Two days later, the Politbureau reversed its decision. The Russian delegation was instructed, in order to strengthen the alliance with the foreign communist trade unionists, to adopt their proposal and support the retention of Lozovsky as General Secretary. Mel'nichansky would be made Second Secretary.²⁵⁵ This may have been thought of merely as a provisional decision – comments made later by Trotsky imply this²⁵⁶ – but in any case Lozovsky succeeded in making himself indispensable subsequently, not least because as a supporter of Stalin he immediately implemented his turns of policy in the RILU, until the latter became obsolete for reasons of high policy following the introduction of the

of the trade unions under NEP, see Carr 1952, vol. 2, p. 326. After this, however, Rudzutak would no longer work in the trade unions but instead would take on functions in the party and state apparatuses.

254 RGASPI 534/3/34 and RGASPI 5/3/682.

255 RGASPI 17/3/276.

256 In a pamphlet written at the end of the 1920s, containing critical reflections on the leading personnel of the Comintern, Trotsky wrote this about Lozovsky: 'One cannot deny that Lozovsky has certain abilities: he has a quick understanding, and a definite grasp of detail. But all these qualities have a very superficial character with him ... His knowledge of foreign languages and of conditions in Western countries brought him into the Profintern, when the assignment of tasks was still carried out in a very chaotic manner. When we became aware of this in the Politbureau, we all shook our heads, Lenin first of all, but we consoled ourselves by saying: he must be removed at the first opportunity' (Trotsky 1930, p. 28).

Popular Front policy. From 1922 onwards his position of leadership in the RILU was no longer put in question; in fact, on the contrary, with the passage of time the organisation became, so to speak, identified with him.

Without a doubt, the most important instrument at the RILU's disposal was its press. The ITUC had issued as its central organ *The International Workers' Movement*, a monthly which came out in four languages. This only reached a restricted group of readers because it was published in Russia, so it was decided to reprint some issues in Berlin, and to supplement the periodical with a bulletin published both in Moscow (as *Biulletin' Mezhdunarodnogo Soveta Professional'nykh Soiuzov*) and in Berlin (as *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*). The RILU statutes adopted by the founding congress prescribed the publication of a journal and a bulletin, each in four languages, without making any more detailed stipulations. An initial publication plan was laid before the Central Council straight away, but some time elapsed before the Executive Bureau, which was concerned with all sorts of other problems, was able to start putting this into effect. It was not until 6 August that it decided to issue a weekly bulletin and a monthly periodical in Moscow in several languages on a provisional basis, until the possibility of publishing foreign-language editions outside Russia could be ensured.²⁵⁷ In line with this decision, the first issue of *The Red Labour Union International* came out on 30 August, initially with the sub-heading 'Bulletin of the Executive Bureau'. This then appeared every week. It was harder to get the monthly periodical off the ground, but eventually in October an issue of *The International Workers' Movement* was published, described as 'number 7'. The previous information bulletins of the ITUC, published in Moscow and Berlin, had ceased publication in August.²⁵⁸ Since this system proved to be too cumbersome to reach the adherents of the RILU, and since the 'Bulletin' which was originally intended to serve the purpose of information alone had quietly developed into a journal which was more and more extensive, the Executive Bureau decided in October to merge the two periodicals into a fortnightly journal, to appear both in Moscow and outside Russia, and at the same time to issue a bulletin for purposes of information and direct political

²⁵⁷ RGASPI 534/3/9/45.

²⁵⁸ The last issue of the *Biulletin' Mezhdunarodnogo Soveta Professional'nykh Soiuzov*, by then under the different title of *Biulletin' Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov*, was a double issue, 39–40, published on 11 August. The last issue of the German version, *Die rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale. Mitteilungsblatt*, was number 32, 27 August. The reporting functions of the latter periodical were taken over by the KPD's weekly trade-union periodical, *Der kommunistische Gewerkschafter*.

guidance in Berlin.²⁵⁹ The new fortnightly organ took over the title *The Red Labour Union International*, and from issue number 8 (15 November) it also appeared regularly in Germany as *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*,²⁶⁰ while the Berlin information bulletin appeared from 1 November onwards under the title *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*.²⁶¹

These periodicals were certainly the most important propaganda instruments of the RILU, though they were not the only ones. A start was made with the publication of pamphlets, which in part contained official material – from the first RILU congress for instance – but were supposed to serve above all to provide information about economic matters and the situation of the trade-union movement in individual countries, and to present the theoretical and political positions of the international.²⁶² The big problem continued to be the distribution of the RILU's publications outside Russia, and as a result the possibility of setting up a publishing house in Germany for the organisation was quickly explored.

This plan came into collision with the KPD's fears, on the basis of previous bad experiences, that the RILU would, without supervision, distribute in Germany publications which might damage the party's work. The KPD therefore proposed that its own publishing houses be used, but the leadership of the RILU did not want to become dependent on the KPD (see chapter 3, section 6.1). There was the added argument that the possession of a publishing house which was separate and not dependent on the Comintern or a communist party would demonstrate to the syndicalists that the RILU was an independent organisation.²⁶³ In 1921, the RILU started to commission a private publisher to print

259 RGASPI 534/3/9/154–5.

260 By March 1922, it had become clear that it was impossible to keep up a fortnightly frequency of publication, and the journal became a monthly. At the same time, the non-Russian editions, which were still published in Russia, were wound up. In addition to this, they were compelled to reduce the size of the bulletin, which until the beginning of 1923 was a cyclostyled sheet only a few pages long (RGASPI 534/3/23/50 and 9). In May, the Executive Bureau had to point out once again that the RILU organ only appeared outside Russia with considerable delay (RGASPI 534/3/23/121–2).

261 The task of providing information in Russia was taken over from 12 November by a *Biulleten' Ispol'nitel'nogo Biuro Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* (this was renamed in 1923 *Mezhdunarodnoe rabochee dvizhenie*).

262 There is a survey of publications from 1 July 1921 until the end of 1922 in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 12, December 1922, p. 914. For further information see Goldbeck 1987.

263 This argument was used by Lozovsky in a letter of October 1921 to Zinoviev (RGASPI 534/3/124/16).

its publications (the Phönix-Verlag or Phöbus-Verlag), but later in the year it bought up an existing Berlin publisher, the Führer-Verlag.²⁶⁴ This was followed by the establishment of publishing outlets in other countries as well.

The financial situation turned out to be a problem. The RILU statutes laid down a complicated formula for establishing the contributions of member organisations, but, with wise foresight, also made the following determination: 'Until the necessary funds have been built up, the money required will be raised by the trade union organisation of the country where the Red International of Labour Unions has its headquarters.'²⁶⁵ The task of financing the first congress had rested entirely on the shoulders of the VTsSPS,²⁶⁶ and the RILU now had to rely exclusively on it for the payment of membership contributions (it had already allotted five percent of its members' contributions to the ITUC from 1 June onwards, and this was now transferred to the RILU).²⁶⁷ It was not for nothing that the budgetary year of the RILU was exactly the same as that of the Russian state (from 1 October to 30 September).²⁶⁸ Admittedly, a circular was sent in September 1921 to all member organisations of the RILU reminding them of their statutory membership dues,²⁶⁹ and the MEB decided in November 1921 to issue special RILU contribution stamps.²⁷⁰ This decision seems to have remained on paper, however, and in general the members were not very willing to pay their dues, perhaps because many organisations had still not completely clarified their attitude towards membership in the RILU. In November, Lozovsky asked the VTsSPS for an advance on the future contributions of other organisations, but in January 1922, when the Executive Bureau discussed the budget, the VTsSPS alone was referred to as providing financial support.²⁷¹

264 RGASPI 534/3/9/164 and 175. There is a copy of the contract of sale, dated 8 October 1921, in RGASPI 534/8/4. It appears from an insertion that the concern had until then published nothing but light fiction of an unpolitical character (there are also some details on the Führer-Verlag in Goldbeck 1987, pp. 9–10).

265 *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, p. 74.

266 See the minutes of the 'Committee on Settling the Costs' of the congress, which met on 6 September 1921 (RGASPI 534/3/15/3).

267 According to the minutes of the secretariat of the communist fraction in the VTsSPS (RGASPI 95/1/22/5).

268 This information is given in a circular (RGASPI 534/3/27).

269 RGASPI 534/3/9/93.

270 RGASPI 534/4/10/5–9.

271 RGASPI 95/1/22/150 and RGASPI 534/3/23/10. There is an estimate of costs for 1922 in RGASPI 534/8/10 which gives the overall monthly expenditure – calculated in rubles – for the following departments: international communications, personnel, publications, office Materials, transport and household expenditure.

It is therefore hardly surprising that it soon had to be asked to raise its contribution.²⁷² The RILU budget was also discussed in the Orgbureau of the RCP, for after all these payments had in part to be made in foreign currency, and it doubtless pressed the RILU to secure a regular income of its own.²⁷³ But at the end of September 1922, Lozovsky could only note, in a report on the state of preparations for the second RILU congress, that apart from the Russian trade unions the only member organisations that had paid were the Bulgarian unions and the UdHuK.²⁷⁴

The ITUC had set up bureaux in a number of countries, which had the job of organising the process of joining the organisation and above all of making sure that representative delegations were elected. The new statutes of the RILU made no mention of their existence. They only referred vaguely to 'authorised representatives' outside Russia.²⁷⁵ At a meeting on 25 July, the Executive Bureau for the first time declared that the bureaux for the Far East, the USA and Great Britain had ceased to exist. Individual representatives (Cannon and Browder for the USA, Mann and Watkins for Great Britain) were appointed to maintain communications temporarily.²⁷⁶

The bureau in Berlin, which gradually took on the name Central European Bureau (MEB), had a special significance, and it was also the only office with which the Executive Bureau was repeatedly concerned. It had decided to set up this bureau as early as 28 July 1921.²⁷⁷ This was the most important instrument of the RILU's activities outside Russia, as it had been for the ITUC as well. It informed Moscow about developments in the West in general, was responsible for communications between Western Europe and Russia, and it also represented the RILU in dealings with the trade-union movements of the West. In addition, it was the first stopping-point for Russian trade-union representatives when they travelled to the West. With the appearance of the *Red Labour Union Bulletin* in the autumn of 1921, it was also the distribution centre for the propaganda with which the Moscow RILU leadership endeavoured to influence the Western European trade-union movement. To fulfil this task the MEB created an apparatus of three to five employees for the publication of the *Bulletin* and the collection of information for Moscow.

272 RGASPI 95/1/22/22–3.

273 RGASPI 534/8/11/4, 5 and 7.

274 RGASPI 534/3/33/7.

275 *Resolutionen, Statuten, Manifeste und Aufrufe* 1921, p. 74.

276 RGASPI 534/3/9/21–2.

277 RGASPI 534/3/9/25. On the establishment of the MEB, see chapter 3, section 7.

The MEB's composition often varied, not least because its members were often in Moscow, but there is only fragmentary information on this in the minutes of the Executive Bureau or the bureau itself.²⁷⁸ It seems that there was always at least one of the MEB's members dispatched from Russia. The work of organisation continued to rest on Max Ziese, as secretary, while Oskar Rusch, who was still the leading personality in the bureau at the time of the ITUC, was removed in autumn 1921 because of his support for the Levi opposition. Other names mentioned for the period between the first and second RILU congresses are Heckert, Melcher, Walcher and Krebs, who was occasionally named as the chairman. The Russian members were Naum Antselovich ('Bernhard'), Viktor Vaksov, and Iuzefovich, alternating with the young Boris Izakov, who has left us a short glimpse into the activities of the bureau in his memoirs.²⁷⁹ George Hardy also entered the bureau in the middle of 1922, to strengthen work with the syndicalists in particular. The Executive Bureau had already tried to find a syndicalist from one of the Latin countries for this purpose, evidently in vain.²⁸⁰

The MEB was very dependent on the KPD's trade-union section (RGZ), or on its *Arbeitsausschuss* [Working Committee], but at the same time it had been instructed by the Executive Bureau to separate its activity from that of the KPD so as to be able to carry out its directive function for the RILU leadership without being affected by the numerous conflicts raging among communist trade unionists in Germany. Moreover, its area of competence extended far beyond the borders of that country. Its minutes show that it was mainly concerned with the trade-union movements of the adjacent countries, above all with the movement in Czechoslovakia on account of the split that developed there in the course of 1922 (which we shall discuss later) and with the NAS, because of that union's internal disputes over membership of the RILU. The MEB was also instructed to develop some activity in Southern Europe, but it apparently failed to do this. The reason was not simply a lack of language skills and local experience. In Southern Europe, the trade-union movement was dominated by syndicalists who had not yet made a decision about whether

278 RGASPI 534/3/9/100 and 154 and RGASPI 534/3/23/26, 43, 113, 183, 207 and 216. The minutes of the MEB are in RGASPI 534/4/9 and 24, which also gives indications about its apparatus. Michael Niederkirchner was active in the bureau as a translator from Russian and later as head of the publishing house which belonged to the Executive Bureau in the 1930s (see his autobiography in SAPMO Ny 4010/1/1/1-18). There is also some material on the activities of the MEB in SAPMO I 2/708/47.

279 Izakov 1977, pp. 21-8, 36-46.

280 RGASPI 534/3/23/26 and 149, and Hardy 1956, p. 147.

to affiliate to the RILU. It therefore had to conduct negotiations on a direct level, instead of through the mediation of an internal body like the MEB. This is why Lozovsky, for example, was sent to France in the summer of 1922. He took advantage of a break in his journey to familiarise himself thoroughly with the activities of the MEB on the spot.²⁸¹ It was not until the next year, after the CGTU had formally affiliated to the RILU, that a Southern European Bureau could be set up.

As mentioned earlier, the British Bureau was declared in July 1921 to be defunct, and replaced by Tom Mann and Nat Watkins, acting as individual RILU representatives. But that was not the end of the story. The British adherents of the RILU were organised in a variety of different ways. There were trade-union sections that had affiliated, there was the communist party, and there was also the Shop Stewards' surviving sphere of influence, the National Workers' Committee Movement, with its Glasgow newspaper *The Worker*. At the end of September 1921, the British Bureau was convened again to form a view of the situation. It was decided that it would cease to be an appointed body and instead become a bureau elected by trade-union delegates, and its function would change from that of a propaganda office to a genuinely executive body.²⁸² On 15 October, speaking to a conference of 600 delegates, Tom Mann made a report on the RILU founding congress for the first time. Further local conferences followed. At the beginning of 1922, the British Bureau finally succeeded in producing a newspaper (its title was *All Power*). In the spring of that year, the National Workers' Committee Movement merged with the British Bureau. *The Worker* now started to appear as the organ of the latter (while *All Power* also continued to be published until July 1924).²⁸³ These measures laid the foundation from which the National Minority Movement (NMM) would arise in 1924 after lengthy discussions within the British communist party and the

281 RGASPI 534/3/23/151.

282 J.T. Murphy, 'The British Bureau of the Red International of Trade and Industrial Unions', *The Worker*, no. 152, 22 October 1921.

283 Streiter 1982, pp. 225–6. See also 'Tätigkeit des britischen Büros der R.G.I.', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 9, 1 December 1921, pp. 31–2; MacPherson, 'Wieder ein Schritt vorwärts', no. 1, January 1922, pp. 31–3; 'Ein neues Organ der R.G.I.', no. 2, February 1922, p. 114; Nat Watkins, 'Bericht der britischen Delegation an den Zentralrat' and 'Die Konferenz der Anhänger der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale in Glasgow', no. 3, March 1922, pp. 176–81. Both Tom Mann (Mann 1921) and J.T. Murphy (Murphy 1921) published reports on events at the RILU founding congress, though Mann's report dealt more with the situation in Russia itself than the congress. On Mann's stay in Russia, see also the notebook he wrote and his letters to his wife (MRC MSS 334/8/18 and 334/3/6/1–12).

Comintern, and, last but not least, the RILU. The NMM was the long-sought-after organisation which combined the different elements of the trade-union opposition.

The RILU did not create any further regional structures in this period. It is true that the idea of setting up a Far Eastern Bureau again emerged in connection with the trade-union discussion during the Congress of Toilers of the Far East held at the start of 1922,²⁸⁴ but in that region the trade unions were still too weak to combine together in any effective way. The RILU was restricted to making contact very occasionally, mainly by using the Comintern as an intermediary. Nothing more was heard from the Balkan Secretariat, the only regional bureau that had been created 'from below', by member organisations of the RILU. The reason for this was political repression, which drastically limited the room for manoeuvre of the communist trade-union movement in most of the Balkan lands.

Relations with the Comintern were naturally of outstanding importance for the RILU. The question of reciprocal representation in the ECCI and the Central Council was settled as early as July 1921, and the Comintern followed this up by pressing for close co-operation. To organise this co-operation, a joint committee consisting of Heckert, Lozovsky, Souvarine, Radek and Andreychine was established on 1 August 1921 by the Narrower Bureau of the ECCI (soon to be renamed the Presidium).²⁸⁵ But its deliberations evidently proceeded very slowly, or perhaps they didn't even get started. A new committee was appointed for the same purpose on 23 September, consisting this time of Béla Kun and Humbert-Droz (for the Comintern) and Lozovsky and Arlandis (for the RILU).²⁸⁶

Despite this lack of co-ordination, the two internationals did conduct joint discussions, in conformity with the organic link that was supposed to exist between them, as for example on 17 August when they adopted a common position on the forthcoming TUC congress in Cardiff, and they did issue joint appeals, as for example the proposal to the IFTU for a joint protest against the repression in Spain and Yugoslavia.²⁸⁷ The ECCI, or its Presidium, also

²⁸⁴ RGASPI 534/3/23/19 and 58–9.

²⁸⁵ See *Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive* 1922, p. 63.

²⁸⁶ See *Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive* 1922, p. 207, and RGASPI 534/3/14/10.

²⁸⁷ See *Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive* 1922, pp. 106–8, 137–8, 255–6 and 258, and RGASPI 534/3/9/129. There are summary accounts of other joint sittings, for example on the relationship between the UdHuK and the KPD, and the TUEL and the CPUSA, in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 53, and in Lozovsky's report on his activities to the Second RILU Congress, in *11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov v Moskve. 19 noiabria–2 dekabria 1922 goda*, Moscow-Petrograd 1923, pp. 20–35, here p. 27.

continued to conduct discussions on trade-union questions in so far as these affected the activities of communist parties. This applied particularly to France, where the communists in the CGT and then the CGTU had initially neglected fractional work, which had only helped the anarcho-sindicalist opponents of the RILU, and to Norway, where the trade unions dominated by the Workers' Party – which was the Norwegian section of the Comintern – were finding it difficult to break with Amsterdam, but it also applied to Germany.²⁸⁸

This close collaboration led to increasing contact between the two internationals, over and above the reciprocal representation agreed initially. It was not only the ECCI and the Central Council which now exchanged representatives. Since these bodies met ever more infrequently because they were too large and had become too cumbersome, the daily conduct of business fell to the Presidium of the ECCI and the Executive Bureau respectively. It was therefore decided to have reciprocal representation in these bodies as well.²⁸⁹ But the delegation of Heckert and Kun to the Executive Bureau that followed this decision was also related to the Executive Bureau's difficult situation with regard to personnel in autumn 1921, as we showed earlier. The two internationals also started to co-operate in the area of journalism and propaganda. The Executive Bureau guaranteed to provide reports for *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* (*Inprekorr*), the Comintern periodical which had appeared in Berlin since the end of September 1921, and it established an international network of correspondents for this purpose.²⁹⁰

Although the representatives of the RILU, headed by Lozovsky, took part continuously in the work of the Comintern leadership,²⁹¹ the RILU still attempted to retain a certain degree of independence. The Executive Bureau resolved at its 1 August 1921 sitting to work jointly with the Comintern only where it was 'absolutely necessary'.²⁹² With this intention, the joint committee mentioned earlier worked out an agreement in the middle of October according to which the secret links of the RILU with its supporters abroad would be oper-

288 See *Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive* 1922, pp. 259, 280 and 363.

289 See *Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive* 1922, pp. 197–8 and 224.

290 RGASPI 534/3/23/49–50, 55 and 83. Apart from the running reports, which we cannot itemise here, the following special issues of *Inprekorr* on trade-union questions published in 1922 should be mentioned: no. 164 (16 August) with many country-specific articles 'on the development of the trade union movement since the end of the World War', and no. 205 (26 October) on the preparations for the Second RILU Congress.

291 See the record of participants in the sittings of the ECCI, given in *Die Tätigkeit der Exekutive* 1922.

292 RGASPI 534/3/9/32.

ated by the appropriate Comintern apparatus, which was the OMS, and the 'administrative-economic department' of the RILU would be merged with its counterpart within the Comintern.²⁹³

The result was that the organisational link between the two bodies was essentially limited to technical matters. There were good reasons for this, as Lozovsky explained at the end of the month in a lengthy letter to Zinoviev. In view of the syndicalist offensive, it was necessary to emphasise the independence of the RILU, as laid down at its first congress. They should therefore avoid moving into the same building (a step which had been considered shortly beforehand),²⁹⁴ they should not combine their departments (with the exception of the OMS), they should come out less often in public with joint statements (such as proclamations and manifestos), and in general they should co-operate on an informal basis rather than according to fixed rules. Outside Russia, the RILU should look independent, and having its own publishing house was a part of this.²⁹⁵ He repeated these arguments a few days later at a meeting of the bureau of the communist fraction in the VTsSPS.²⁹⁶ He was able to win over the leadership of the Russian trade unions to his line. The strong connection between the two was emphasised, for instance, by the fact that the headquarters of the RILU was located in the house of the Russian trade unions.²⁹⁷

The Communist International had by no means given up its claim to 'intellectual leadership', as it had been described in the debates of the summer of 1921. This was shown by the proceedings of the first plenum of the Enlarged ECCI (24 February to 4 March 1922), which took place approximately at the same time as a session of the Central Council of the RILU.²⁹⁸ The discussion of trade-union matters that took place there was, however, less concerned with

293 RGASPI 534/3/9/149.

294 RGASPI 534/3/9/83.

295 RGASPI 534/3/14/15–17. He added that the RILU should avoid breaking with the syndicalists, because otherwise it would rest on the communists alone, in view of the simultaneous departure of the 'right wing' (as in Italy and Norway). For the syndicalists, he had been told by Rosmer, what was decisive was the way the RILU looked from outside, even if ultimately the decisions were all made by the CC of the RCP, which the syndicalists would be unaware of, however.

296 RGASPI 95/1/22/163.

297 RGASPI 95/1/27/22. See also Izakov 1977, p. 34.

298 The reports of Lozovsky and Brandler introducing the trade-union discussion were the only parts of the proceedings of the ECCI Plenum to be published (by the RILU press, significantly). See *Der Kampf der Kommunisten* 1922. The resolution adopted by the ECCI Plenum is on pp. 34–6 of this document.

a direct claim to control over the RILU than it was with the 'open questions' which were still unsettled in the Comintern. These included the syndicalist opposition, which was mainly active outside the Comintern's sphere, but continued to exist in France, even in parts of the party, and also the 'tendencies towards liquidationism' evident in Germany and Norway. The ECCI Plenum called on all communists to support and strengthen the RILU, but it modified its tactical approach in the sense that communists were instructed only to call for the immediate affiliation of their organisations to the RILU if they had a majority in the trade unions. Otherwise they should restrict themselves to 'ideological' affiliation (affiliation 'in terms of ideas'). This did not mean a division of labour between the trade union and political internationals, such as had existed in prewar Social Democracy. Such a policy would have contradicted their understanding of what it was to be a communist. Nevertheless, there was a certain shift of emphasis, under which concrete questions of trade-union work were assigned to the RILU, even if the right to determine the general line continued to be claimed by the Comintern. In particular, any change of line would first have to be agreed and implemented by the communist parties.²⁹⁹ The RILU also recognised this: 'Although the RILU is entitled to lay down the line for its members, a formal decision by the Comintern is required in order to change the tactics of the communist party in questions concerning the trade union movement'.³⁰⁰

The position taken by the ITUC towards the Amsterdam International had been mainly marked by public attacks. With the coming of the RILU, however, this tactic was modified, although the organisational struggle over the international affiliation of the national trade-union centres continued to rage. The RILU continued to reject in principle any justification for the existence of the IFTU, but it still made repeated appeals to it, as for example in autumn 1921 when, together with the Comintern, it called for joint action against the repression in Spain and Yugoslavia, or in December 1921 and January 1922 when it proposed measures to prevent the threatened split in the French trade unions. These appeals were an expression of the turn towards a united front policy at the end of 1921, which we shall examine later in more detail. The IFTU gave non-committal replies to these appeals, adding that the RILU bore the guilt for any splits.

299 This point perhaps also expressed the feeling that the RILU was an 'alliance', a significant section of which had still not yet found its way to communism.

300 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 54.

Moreover, the IFTU disdainfully ignored the RILU when mounting its relief action for starving Russia in August 1921. It co-operated exclusively with the Russian state authorities. The RILU had already issued an appeal for help, and it delegated representatives to the committee set up by the Comintern in Berlin for the purpose.³⁰¹ These endeavours soon reached their limit,³⁰² and another, more far-reaching notion of developing a campaign for an international workers' loan for the reconstruction of the Russian economy also had limited consequences.³⁰³ It was in fact the IFTU that provided the greater part of the famine relief.

301 RGASPI 534/3/9/32. The text of the appeal is in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, 30 August 1921, pp. 32–3. See also Tom Mann, 'An der Hungerfront' and Anton Maier, 'Die Hungersnot in Rußland und das Ausland', no. 2, pp. 4–6 and 6–10. The RILU delegates on this committee were Anton Maier (who left Russia for this purpose, and although elected would no longer return to the Executive Bureau), Bill Haywood, Carvalho (the representative of the Portuguese CGT who had been sent to Moscow), and a representative of the VTsSPS (RGASPI 534/3/108, 111 and 117). On international communist relief activities at this time, out of which (what was known in English as) the Workers' International Relief organisation emerged, see Gross 1967, pp. 125–40 and Jung 1991, pp. 221–5.

302 The Executive Bureau discussed famine relief repeatedly in August and September, but after that it only surfaced sporadically, at meetings in February and June 1922 in connection with discussions with the Moscow representative of the Berlin aid committee, Franz Jung (RGASPI 534/3/29/37 and 140). It is also significant that it does not figure at all in the report on the Executive Bureau's activities presented to the Second RILU Congress.

303 A. Losowski, 'Internationale Arbeiteranleihe für das russische Proletariat', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5, 10 October 1921, pp. 195–7. See also Resis 1964, p. 236. On the way this workers' loan was to be organised, see Gross 1967, pp. 140–3. Plans to mobilise the resources of the international trade-union movement for Russia's economic development never played a large part in the Bolsheviks' calculations, not least because of the political problems associated with the idea. The Russians had clashed with the ADGB in 1920 over the locomotive affair (see chapter 2, section 4). The project to develop the Kuzbas did not meet with much enthusiasm in the IWW, although it was possible to implement it on a smaller scale (see section 2 of this chapter). When the initiative came from outside, it met with difficulties typical of the behaviour of the new Soviet bureaucracy, which was capable of letting even well-meaning efforts to assist run into the sand. At the beginning of 1921, for example, a congress of the most important US engineering union, the International Association of Machinists (IAM), had decided to support the revolutions in Mexico and in Russia by organising the purchase of machines. Two members of its executive were sent to Europe in May 1921 for this purpose, but they were refused permission to enter Russia by the Soviet embassy in Riga, so they had to return to America without achieving anything. After protests were made, the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs explained that the trade unionists had said they wanted to enter for commercial purposes. Since Russia was boycotting American speculators, they had

When the IFTU first received the news about the threat of famine in Russia, in the middle of August, it immediately set in motion a relief action of its own. This was conducted completely independently, not only to avoid losses through organisational friction, but above all in order to 'give it the character of a purely proletarian act of assistance out of working-class solidarity'. It therefore rejected offers of co-operation from both the purely humanitarian Nansen Committee and the communist organisations, since the latter had been set up by the Russian government. It negotiated directly with Kopp, the Russian representative in Berlin, and secured a contractual guarantee that it would be allowed to act independently.³⁰⁴

The IFTU was not content with simply ignoring the RILU or engaging in a propaganda battle with it. It also reverted to its earlier invitation at the end of 1919 to the Russian trade unions to join it. When the chairman of the Norwegian trade unions Lian met IFTU representatives on 17 February as

not been let in. They should try again, this time as trade-union representatives. But by then the IAM had lost interest in the matter, not least because they were now involved in a fierce battle with an opposition within the union, which was also supported by the communists. (See Perlman 1961, pp. 67–8, 'Soviet Russia. Report of President Johnston and Attorney Mulholland on their recent visit to Europe and the borders of Russia', *Machinists' Monthly Journal*, no. 9, September 1921, pp. 739–43, and no. 10, October 1921, pp. 834–9, Foner 1991, vol. 9, pp. 194–200, RGASPI 534/8/4 and RGASPI 534/8/1–4). One of the few successful examples of co-operation with Russia was the Russian-American Industrial Corporation, set up with the help of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA), which was independent of the AFL, in order to modernise the Russian clothing industry. The successful accomplishment of this project was certainly due in considerable part to the energetic support given by Lenin, who met several times with the ACWA chairman Hillman. The RILU, on the other hand, played no role in its implementation, although it had certain contacts in the union, which we shall discuss later. On the whole question, see Steven Fraser 1993, pp. 185–8 and Foner 1991, vol. 9, pp. 311–22.

- 304 See the sections on this subject in *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1919–1921*, pp. 54–8 [English: *First Report 1922*, pp. 55–8] and *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1922–23* pp. 78–81 [English: *Report on the Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions during the years 1922 and 1923* Amsterdam 1924, pp. 77–80]. See also Fimmen's letter to Kopp of 23 September 1921 and the agreement signed by the IFTU with the Russian state commission on 18 October 1921 (RGASPI 534/3/17/20 and 56). The IFTU action led by Fimmen also had a side-effect. When he was negotiating with the Russian embassy, he made the acquaintance of Willi Münzenberg, who was in Berlin co-ordinating the international relief effort on the communist side (Gross 1967, p. 129). The impact of this meeting did not fully emerge until later, after 1923 when Fimmen had quarrelled with the IFTU leadership and begun to favour a certain degree of co-operation with the communists, at least until 1928.

part of his attempts to mediate between the two internationals, this is what he was told.³⁰⁵ Several speakers at the IFTU congress at the end of April in Rome seized on this point and repeated the invitation to the Russian trade unions. At the same time, speaking for the IFTU executive, Fimmen refused 'to recognise the RILU or to negotiate with it', because it 'maintains that it represents members we ourselves represent'.³⁰⁶ The reason why the Russians were not already there at the congress was given by Oudegeest in response to a complaint by the Norwegian trade-union chairman Lian. He said the Russians had not asked to participate in the IFTU. There had therefore been no reason to invite them.³⁰⁷

The RILU was not unaware of the difference between the way the IFTU approached it and the way it approached the Russian trade unions. This difference would also have its repercussions in later years. Lozovsky wrote in March 1922: 'We would like to set the Amsterdammers' minds at rest. The Russian trade unions have no intention of negotiating with them. The Russian trade unions have taken the initiative of creating a trade union international, and they will not enter into any kind of negotiation with any international organisation apart from the RILU'.³⁰⁸ Even so, he also took some prophylactic measures against this danger. The IFTU congress in Rome was preceded by a discussion between trade unions on economic questions which met in Genoa from 15–17 April. The

305 'Mitteilung des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes über die Frage der Einheitsfront', *Die Internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, March–April 1922, p. 71.

306 *Bericht über den internationalen. Gewerkschaftskongress abgehalten in Rom vom 20–26 April 1922 im Teatro Argentina*, Amsterdam, 1923, p. 28. There is a similar comment by Merheim (p. 100) and the same view is expressed in a resolution 'On the Reaction' (p. 114) according to which the united front is to be achieved by the entry into the IFTU of the trade unions not yet affiliated to it, which includes the Russian trade unions. There is a discussion of the IFTU congress of 1922 from the communist side in H. Brandler, 'Die Amsterdamer in Rom', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 347–52.

307 The Norwegian trade unions were represented by Lian, but he was only present as an observer and he left before the end of the congress. He expressed his regret that the Russians were absent in a letter, which is what led Oudegeest to give his explanation (*Bericht über den internationalen. Gewerkschaftskongress 1923*, p. 96). Brandler (1922) reports a declaration made by Lian after his return to Norway, in which he justified his early departure from the congress: at the previous congress, in 1919, one could at least sense a certain will to fight. At this congress it became clear that there was 'no fighting spirit and no atmosphere', so he saw no point in staying there any longer.

308 A. Losowsky, 'Ergebnisse und Perspektiven (Über die Arbeiten des Zentralrates der RGI)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 159–64, here p. 163.

opportunity arose because an international conference on economic reconstruction was taking place there at the time, at which Soviet Russia was also represented. The communist fraction in the VTSPS explicitly instructed the two Russian trade-union representatives at Genoa, Rudzutak and Sapronov, not to hold any discussions with the IFTU representatives there. The IFTU, it insisted, must negotiate with the RILU alone.³⁰⁹

It was not possible, however, to maintain this purely negative position for very long. At the end of May, the Russian trade unions declared that they were not thinking of withdrawing from the RILU. All the same, if the IFTU was really serious about engaging in a common struggle, they were ready to do this, but not 'to pace around in ministerial antechambers and make compromises with the bourgeoisie'. As a first step, an IFTU representative could be invited to the forthcoming Russian trade-union congress, provided that in return a Russian representative was invited to the next trade-union congress in Germany or Britain with a right to speak. Joint discussion meetings should also be organised in the major European cities.³¹⁰

The IFTU again disdainfully ignored this offer by the Russian trade unions,³¹¹ and the constant appeals issued by the RILU did not fare any better. In March, the RILU called on the IFTU to mount joint activities in response to a big lockout of the British metalworkers. It refused, adding that it was in any case far too busy with measures for the economic reconstruction of Russia (in other words, famine relief).³¹² In November, admittedly, the IFTU responded to a similar appeal by saying that it was fundamentally in favour of giving joint support to the French miners, who were about to go on strike.³¹³ The difference in attitude

309 RGASPI 95/1/27/132.

310 'Offener Brief an die Amsterdamer Internationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 395–7.

311 In the section entitled 'Amsterdam and Moscow' in the IFTU's 1922–3 report (*Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1922–23*, Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 87–96) [English: *Report on the Activities 1922–23* Amsterdam, 1924, pp. 85–93], it is not even mentioned once.

312 The complete correspondence between the RILU and the IFTU is preserved in RGASPI 534/3/17, but in any case the letters were always published. The one mentioned here is in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 28–30. On the struggle of the British metalworkers, see M. Smith, 'Der englische Kapitalismus im Konflikt mit den Arbeitern der Produktionsmittelerzeugung', and M. Sch-ü, 'Der Konflikt in der Metallindustrie', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 263–7 and 281–5. On the activities of the British communists and in particular of the British Bureau of the RILU, see Macfarlane 1966, pp. 119–21.

313 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 30, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, p. 700.

is only surprising at first glance. In Great Britain, the RILU was only present as a propaganda organisation, whereas in France it possessed its own influential mineworkers' trade union within the framework of the CGTU, which was in competition with the corresponding CGT-affiliated trade union, hence in this case the IFTU was unable to reject the offer in principle.³¹⁴

This did not change the basic atmosphere of confrontation, however. What the situation was actually like was shown at this time by a further exchange of letters, entirely polemical in character. Fimmen, on behalf of the IFTU bureau, sent an 'open letter' to the 'General Secretary of the so-called Red Trade Union International', addressing him as 'Dear Mr. Lozovsky', and rejecting the communist assertion that the IFTU was in the pay of the bourgeoisie. He presented a statement of income and expenditure over the last few years, proving that the IFTU was exclusively financed by its members' contributions. Lozovsky countered furiously by saying that there were many adherents of the RILU among the people who paid contributions to Amsterdam. Hence the IFTU ought actually to send a corresponding sum of money to Moscow.³¹⁵

In such circumstances it was naturally impossible to hope for any practical result of any kind. Matters could only be advanced by a direct meeting, and this did in fact come about in the context of the peace congress summoned by the IFTU for the end of December at The Hague, although the invitation was sent to the Russian trade unions and not to the RILU, significantly.³¹⁶ The participation of Russian representatives did not prevent the public polemics between the RILU and the IFTU from continuing, but it was to prove the first step on the road to the numerous unification initiatives which appeared from 1923 to 1924 onwards to bring within the bounds of possibility the entry of the Russian trade unions into the IFTU, which would have as a logical consequence the dissolution of the RILU and the restoration of the unity of the international trade-union movement.

314 Almost at the same time, the RILU also proposed joint action against Italian Fascism, but Fimmen replied evasively to this proposal, saying that the bureau of the IFTU would discuss this when it next met (*Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 30).

315 'Briefwechsel zwischen Amsterdam und Moskau', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 11, November 1922, pp. 792–3. It was only with difficulty that Lozovsky was able to persuade the Executive Bureau to send this letter. Some members had strong reservations about it.

316 The Executive Bureau had already approved the participation of the VTsSPS in the middle of October (RGASPI 534/3/23/202). The ECCI Presidium also resolved on 26 October to recommend participation to the Russian trade unions if they were allowed at least some opportunities to speak at the congress (RGASPI 534/3/28/73).

The weight the RILU could throw into the scales in the battle with its rival depended ultimately on the role it could play in trade-union struggles. In this connection, the first thing to do was to determine its attitude towards them. The ITUC had been founded in an atmosphere of revolutionary optimism, in the expectation that revolutionary mass struggles were directly in the offing. There were still traces of this view of the situation perceptible at the founding congress of the RILU, but they were very quickly replaced by a less optimistic picture.

In the course of 1921, most countries experienced the end of the postwar boom. Unemployment rose sharply and was accompanied by a series of bitter labour conflicts. Political attacks on the labour movement also increased in intensity, a development exemplified most dramatically by Italian Fascism, and many defeats were suffered as a result. All these factors led to a decline of the trade-union movement, which had expanded so strongly after the end of the war. This decline was certainly worsened by the political split between social democrats and communists.

In November 1922, addressing the Fourth Comintern Congress, Lozovsky looked back on developments since 1921:

Hundreds of thousands of workers left the unions. Unions crumbled away, losing strength and the capacity to counter the capitalist attacks. At the beginning of 1920, the CGT in France had more than two million members. Now its two successor organisations together have only 600,000 members. In Italy the number of union members has fallen from two million to 700,000. In Britain the number dropped by 1,300,000. In the United States unions have lost about 1,500,000 members. We see a similar decline in membership in Czechoslovakia, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark and so on. Only in Germany and Austria do the membership totals remain at approximately the former levels. But this results not so much from intensely revolutionary convictions of the trade-union leaders in these countries, but from the tragic conditions afflicting the Austrian and German proletariat ... Apart from numerical decline, the trade unions are also marked by a growing uncertainty and lack of confidence in their own strength. For many years, the Amsterdamers proclaimed that great reforms were on the way ... Now they have fallen silent. The flowers have wilted and the fires have burned out.³¹⁷

317 *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der KI, Petrograd-Moscow vom 5. November bis 5. Dezember 1922*, Hamburg, 1923, p. 451 [English: *Toward the United Front. Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, 1922*, Leiden, 2012, pp. 531–2].

The RILU had been talking about 'capital's offensive' since as early as the autumn of 1921.³¹⁸ At the end of September, the Executive Bureau called for the formation of a 'proletarian united front'. The struggle could be waged through extensive strikes, the establishment of factory committees, factory occupations, the formation of broad-based action committees, and so on.³¹⁹ This was still a manifesto which called in very general terms for a revolutionary struggle and was very vague about possible alliance partners: it was addressed to 'all those who really want to fight'. In this context, the extent to which one could approach the reformist organisations for help remained an open question. A few months later, however, this method of approach culminated in the proclamation of the united front policy. At the end of December, after the new line had received prior approval from the Eleventh Party Conference of the RCP, the ECCI and the RILU's Executive Bureau together issued a call for a united front, in which they appealed to all workers' organisations, including both the reformists and the syndicalists, to engage in a common struggle for a programme in defence of the workers' immediate interests.³²⁰

This new policy did not make the situation of the RILU any easier, since it appeared to confirm the 'liquidationist' tendencies which had emerged in a number of countries. Nevertheless, the leaders of both the Comintern and the RILU succeeded in suppressing these tendencies very quickly, as was noted in February and March 1922, both at the Enlarged ECCI Plenum and the second session of the Central Council.

The RILU's endeavours to insert itself into the (proposed) united front of the political internationals were unsuccessful. Representatives of the Comintern,

318 The relevant sections of *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 5–31, give a thorough account of this phenomenon. The RILU published a detailed analysis of the economic background and the socio-political consequences of the capitalist offensive in Russian: *Mirovoe nastuplenie kapitala* (Krasnaia Kniga, 1), Moscow, 1922.

319 'Die rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale und die Offensive des Kapitals', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 1–5.

320 *Die proletarische Einheitsfront. Aufruf der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale und der Exekutive der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (Moskau, 1. Januar 1922). *Leitsätze über die Einheitsfront* (Einstimmig angenommen von der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale am 28. Dezember 1921), Hamburg, 1922 [English version: Degras 1956, pp. 317–19]. See also 'Rezoliutsiia o taktike Komintern', *Vserossiiskaia konferentsiia RKP (b)* (19–22 dekabria 1921 g.). *Stenograficheskii otchet*, Rostov, 1922, pp. 174–5. On the background of the united front, see Broué 1997, pp. 249–54 and Alexander Watlin, 'Die Geburt der Einheitsfronttakik: Die russische Dimension', in Watlin, *Die Komintern 1919–1929. Historische Studien*, Mainz, 1993, pp. 45–72.

the Second International and the International Working Union of Socialist Parties (the 'Two and Half' or Vienna International) met in Berlin between 2–5 April 1922. Communist attempts to call a much broader conference, extending further left to include the syndicalists,³²¹ had already failed before the meeting began, as had the attempt to draw in the trade-union internationals, and thus to expand it into a general workers' congress. Trade-union matters only emerged at the Berlin meeting in the form of an attack by the Social Democrats on the communist practice of cell-building. The united front broke apart soon after it had been initiated, partly as a result of the trial of the Socialist Revolutionaries which was held in Moscow in the spring of 1922. The Committee of Nine set up by the Berlin meeting convened only on one occasion, on 23 May 1922.³²² The Berlin meeting did, however, result in a *rapprochement* between the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals, which led in the following year to their reunification. Another important effect of these events was that the IFTU now abandoned its previous political reticence – it had refused to engage in separate negotiations with one or other of the rival political internationals – and in July 1922 it sat down at a table with representatives of the two social-democratic internationals for the first time. After the merger of the two internationals in 1923, this became a regular event.³²³

The political marginalisation of the RILU was essentially only a repetition of what had already taken place in the sphere of international trade unionism. The degree of support it could muster in individual national trade-union movements would inevitably be of decisive significance if it wanted to escape from its marginal position.

Immediately after its founding congress, with the aim of strengthening its organisation, the RILU had announced an 'international RILU week' for 1–8 December 1921, during which it was envisaged that propaganda actions would

321 The syndicalists naturally had very little liking for the united front policy. See Thorpe 1989, pp. 210–14.

322 See A. Losowsky, 'Die drei Internationalen und die gewerkschaftliche Einheitsfront', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 259–63; Watlin 1993; and Resis 1964, pp. 258–62. The IFTU also protested against the trial, thus placing itself at the side of international Social Democracy (*Bericht IGB-Kongress 1922*, pp. 100–1, and 'Die Verfolgung der Sozialrevolutionäre in Russland', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 4, July–August 1922, pp. 205–6).

323 'Stellung zu den sozialistischen Internationalen', *Erster Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1919–1921*, pp. 64–6, and 'Das Verhältnis zur Sozialistischen Internationale', *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1922–23*, pp. 102–5.

take place to publicise the resolutions of the congress and encourage trade unions to join it.³²⁴ But the results were rather unimpressive, to judge from the few brief reports on the week that were published.³²⁵ Outside Russia, little more had been done than to distribute the manifesto and to organise a number of meetings. A worldwide list of declarations of support and affiliations to the RILU, which was published at the same time, could not conceal the fact that few functioning trade-union organisations, really anchored in the workers' movement of their country, had joined the RILU.³²⁶ As Brandler wrote, in a sketch of the RILU's prospects based on an evaluation of the current situation, 'the RILU is for the moment still mainly a revolutionary ideology'.³²⁷

The process of including the RILU's adherents in the organisation moved forward only slowly. We have already looked in detail at the disagreements within the syndicalist organisations. Not until June 1922, with the congress at Saint-Étienne, could the RILU demonstrate a success, as a result of which the affiliation of an important national trade-union centre appeared to be on the cards in the immediate future. This was expected to have an impact on the whole syndicalist spectrum. Outside the area of syndicalist influence, and if we disregard for the moment the exception of the Balkans, where there were communist (formerly social-democratic) unions, which were, however, firstly, relatively uninfluential in these predominantly agricultural countries, and secondly, subject to severe repressive measures, the activity of the RILU consisted essentially of fractional manoeuvring within trade unions which were affiliated to the IFTU, and this in turn depended on the trade-union work of the communist parties.³²⁸

There was only one other industrial country in Europe where the RILU was able to gain a success in 1922: Czechoslovakia. The country had a relatively strong trade-union movement, but it was extremely fragmented, above all on account of nationality conflicts, particularly between the German Bohemian

324 RGASPI 534/3/9/46, 66–7 and 179. See also 'Die Werbewoche der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 9, 1 December 1921, pp. 3–5.

325 *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, 15 December 1921 and no. 11, 31 December 1921.

326 S. Forgeron, 'Unsere Kräfte', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 11, 31 December 1921, pp. 13–25.

327 Heinrich Brandler, 'Die Entwicklungsbedingungen der R.G.I.', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, January 1922, pp. 9–18, here p. 9.

328 There is a detailed survey of the development of the RILU's support since the founding congress, classified by country, in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 98–151.

(Sudeten German) and Czech trade unions.³²⁹ The most important central trade-union organisation after the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1918 was the *Odborové Sdružení Československé* (OSČ – Czechoslovak Trade Union Association), which stood close to Czechoslovak Social Democracy.³³⁰ The OSČ originated from the decision of the Czech trade unions to separate from the Vienna Trade Union Commission before the First World War. This had led, at the time, to a conflict that burdened both the Second International and the International Secretariat. A strong current within the OSČ developed in 1920–1 in favour of affiliating to the RILU (this current developed in parallel with the formation of the communist party out of Czechoslovak Social Democracy). Meanwhile, a Sudeten German communist party had already formed. This worked in the independent Sudeten German trade-union movement, which had joined together to form the so-called Reichenberg [Liberec] Commission.

In the course of 1921, the communists succeeded in gaining a majority in a number of important trade unions, including the unions of chemical and agricultural workers. The reaction of the OSČ leadership followed promptly, in the shape of expulsions and the reorganisation of the offending trade unions. (The communist textile workers were expelled from the Reichenberg [Liberec] Commission in the same way). The RILU leadership attempted to intervene by putting forward a similar line to the one applied in France. Here too a majority for its supporters appeared likely, but under no circumstances should they themselves take the initiative and break up the organisation. If they remained a minority at the congress of the OSČ which was due to take place in January 1922, they should submit to the majority. But not only was it not in the OSČ leadership's interest to wait until it lost its majority at the next opportunity; there were also left radical tendencies spreading within the revolutionary camp which aimed for an immediate break. The communist party, itself riven by severe internal conflict, was unable to control these radical elements. The communist-led Union of Agricultural Workers had refused to pay any further contributions to the OSČ, and its delegates were therefore no longer recognised. Thanks to this, the OSČ leadership managed to retain a majority at the congress. The final split took place shortly afterwards. At the end of October 1922, after

329 There is an overall survey of the background and prior history of the communist trade unions in Czechoslovakia in McDermott 1988, pp. 1–162.

330 McDermott (1988, pp. 37–8 and 248) gives the following membership figures for 1921: 670,000 OSČ, 370,000 Reichenberg [Liberec] Commission (the Sudeten German trade-union organisation), and others over 500,000. With trade-union membership covering over 50 percent of the workforce, the Czechoslovak working class was one of the best organised in Europe in those years.

protracted discussions both within the revolutionary opposition and between the latter and the OSČ leadership, a new trade-union federation was finally founded. It was given the name International All-Trade Union Confederation (MVS, or *Mezinárodní Všeodborový Svaz*) and it immediately declared its affiliation to the RILU.³³¹

In the approach to the founding congress of the MVS, the RILU had attempted to avoid a split. It also had strong reservations about the opposition's organisational views, which involved the creation of 'One Big Union' on the industrial unionist model, whereby the organisations in different trades and industries should be merely sections of a single, unified organisation. Nevertheless, the final result was that it gained the support of another national trade-union centre, which was by no means insignificant.³³² There was one aspect in which the MVS did follow the RILU's decisions: it had been organised from the outset on a multinational basis. The communist trade unions of the Sudeten Germans had taken part in its establishment, whereas the OSČ and the Reichenberg Commission did not merge until the end of the 1920s, after protracted attempts at mediation and under 'gentle pressure' from the IFTU. But the Czechoslovak trade-union movement was too fragmented nationally and politically for the MVS to be able to gain a dominant influence in the long term. As McDermott has written: 'In numerical terms, the creation of the MVS was not a great success, approximately one in seven OSČ members joining the red trade unions in late 1922 ... By 1923 ... membership rose to 24 percent of the 1921 OSČ total, peaking at roughly 30 percent in 1924. As far as the Czechoslovak trade union movement as a whole is concerned, at no time in the 1920s did the Red Unions organise more than 12 percent of the total unionised workforce, and this despite the fact that the MVS was the only multinational union centre in Czechoslovakia'.³³³ The MVS, at least for a few years, represented an important bastion of

331 For details of this split, see McDermott 1988, pp. 63–96. See also 'Zum außerordentlichen Gewerkschaftskongreß', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 2, February 1922, pp. 121–3; Arno Hais, 'Nach dem Gewerkschaftskongreß', no. 3, March 1922, pp. 184–8; Karl Kreibich, 'Auf dem Wege zur Eroberung der Gewerkschaften', no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 370–3; 'Die Spaltung der Gewerkschaften durch die Amsterdamer', no. 8, August 1922, pp. 512–14; and 'Bericht an den zweiten Kongreß der R.G.I. über die Gewerkschaftsbewegung in der Tschechoslovakei', no. 12, December 1922, pp. 879–83. Heinrich Brandler, who was one of the two RILU representatives at the MVS's founding congress (the other was Mel'nichansky), wrote a detailed report on the proceedings (SAPMO RY 11/2/3/218/34–49).

332 'An den Gewerkschaftskongreß der Tschechoslovakei', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, October 1922, pp. 695–6, RGASPI 534/3/9/197 and 204, and RGASPI 534/3/23/80, 135, 142, 184, 201 and 207.

333 McDermott 1988, p. 95.

the RILU in the European workers' movement. But the RILU did not achieve any great international breakthrough through its creation.

Events developed somewhat differently in the English-speaking countries, since the communist parties established there in 1919–20 were very small, had a marginal position in the organised workers' movement, and were in addition characterised by severe internal factionalism and even splits. Since, apart from this, these countries were strongly imbued with 'trade unionist' traditions, in which the political workers' movement either played a small part or was of very recent date, their trade unions contained oppositional currents whose influence spread far beyond what the organised fractional work of the communists could achieve.³³⁴

While the movement towards the unification of the trade-union opposition took a long time in Britain and was not completed until 1924, in the USA developments moved at a faster pace. The initiative came from outside, in the person of Foster, who had made sure that he received the organisational and financial assistance of the RILU when he visited Moscow for its founding congress.

Foster proclaimed the setting up of the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL) as early as November 1920. Its aim was to combine together all the oppositional tendencies in the AFL while strictly rejecting any attempt to split the trade unions.³³⁵ This form of organisation harked back to Foster's earlier syndicalist activities, in the Syndicalist League of North America, founded in 1911, and the International Trade Union Educational League, founded in 1916. Both of these organisations aimed to work within the AFL. Neither of them lasted very long. The TUEL, for its part, remained for many months a project rather than a real organisation (it did not have its own press organ, for example). This changed with Foster's visit to Russia in the summer of 1921 and the firm promises of help given by the RILU. He still experienced great difficulty in getting the movement off the ground, but the RILU's help made it possible to issue a monthly journal from March 1922, the *Labor Herald*, and in August 1922 the first TUEL conference took place. A series of actions had already been

334 This point was made by Lozovsky at the Fourth Comintern Congress in November 1922 (*Protokoll Komintern-Kongress 1922*, pp. 461–2) [English: *Toward the United Front 2012*, pp. 542–4].

335 On the establishment and rise of the TUEL, see Johanningsmeier 1994, pp. 156–7 and 175–96; Foner 1991, vol. 9, pp. 104–32; 'Die Liga der Gewerkschaftspropaganda', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 291–4; and 'Liga für Gewerkschaftspropaganda', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 9, September 1922, pp. 591–2. For the proceedings of the TUEL's founding conference, see *Labor Herald*, no. 7, September 1922.

undertaken: in the railroad unions, in the metalworkers' unions, where the TUEL had supported the electoral campaign of a left-wing socialist, and among the miners, where a bitter struggle was developing between the trade-union leadership and a growing opposition.³³⁶ 'Amalgamation', or the joining together of the fragmented trade-based unions, was one of the central demands of the TUEL. In order to disarm any suspicion that he was splitting the unions ('dual unionism'), Foster did not establish the TUEL as a membership organisation. Anyone who took out a subscription to the *Labor Herald* could belong to it. In line with the structure of many US trade unions, the TUEL expected to be active in Canada as well. It naturally declared its support for the RILU. It called on the AFL trade unions to join (although at the founding congress there was not yet any suggestion of a formal organisational link).

The TUEL's programme of joining together radicals in the trade-union movement met with considerable sympathy, first of all from a group who were called the 'Progressives' in the AFL. They controlled the leadership of the latter's Chicago local, and were present in a number of trade unions with old socialist traditions. The Progressives were sharply critical of Gompers and although they by no means shared the more far-reaching communist inclinations of Foster, they sympathised with many of the trade-union related demands of the TUEL, which were directed towards the transformation of the AFL into a group of industrial trade unions with a class struggle agenda.³³⁷

Foster had built up the TUEL in close co-operation with the communist party after his return from Russia; the link between the two was provided by Earl

336 The UMW leadership, under the dictatorial domination of John L. Lewis, did not do the TUEL any favours. In 1923, it published a series of articles, spiced up with numerous details clearly gleaned from reports by informers within the movement, on the activities of the communist party and the TUEL, describing these as part of an 'anti-American conspiracy' which was essentially a continuation of the subversive endeavours of William II's Germany during the First World War. These articles were also published as a document by the United States Senate (*Attempt by Communists to Seize the American labor Movement, Document no. 14, 68th Congress, 1st Session, Senate, Washington, DC, 1924*). The TUEL was to fight many hard struggles in the coming years against Lewis, and he was presented in communist propaganda as the prototype of the reactionary trade-union bureaucrat, but he would go on after 1935 to build the CIO under the banner of the Popular Front in close co-operation with the CPUSA. (See Alan Singer, 'Communists and Coal Miners: Rank-and-File Organizing in the United Mine Workers of America During the 1930s', *Science and Society*, no. 2, 1991, pp. 132–57, and Melvyn Dubofsky and Warren Van Tine, *John L. Lewis: A Biography*, New York, 1977).

337 On the Progressives, and their relationship with the TUEL at this time, see Montgomery 1987, pp. 420–4, 431–2.

Browder, who organised the American delegation to the founding congress of the RILU. He went to live in Chicago, where the TUEL had its headquarters.³³⁸ Foster himself first publicly declared his allegiance to the party in August 1922, formally becoming a member at that point. It continued to be shaken by a severe factional conflict until late in 1922. This had been ignited by the question of whether the main stress in communist activity should be shifted to legal work.³³⁹ Thanks to the support of the Comintern, which had sent a delegation to the USA for this purpose in summer 1922, in which the RILU was represented by Reinstein, the supporters of legal activity gradually won the day in the course of 1922. Legal activity meant above all concentrating the party's work on the trade unions. The TUEL moved into the forefront of communist activities. The visible expression of this was Foster's report on trade-union matters at a conference of the communist party which took place shortly before the founding congress of the TUEL. Both sides resolved to co-operate closely together.³⁴⁰

The RILU had followed this development with attention and supported it from the beginning. The degree of success the TUEL would achieve only became clear in the course of 1922, however. As late as November 1921, it was listed by the Executive Bureau as merely one of several movements worth supporting.³⁴¹ Similarly, at the end of March 1922, the Executive Bureau stated that while priority should continue to be given to work within the AFL, the most important task for the supporters of the RILU was to unite together all the trade unions standing outside that organisation.³⁴²

The merger between all the independent left-wing trade unions in Greater New York to form the United Labor Council at the turn of 1921–2 represented an

338 Browder, *No Man's Land*, (unpublished autobiography), pp. 169–79 and 177–9.

339 Since the end of 1921, a legal Workers' Party had existed alongside the illegal Communist Party. The latter was split into two factions as a result: a left opposition had split off, because it regarded the formation of the Workers' Party together with left-wing socialists as an act of capitulation. The left opposition itself soon created a legal organisation as well, the United Toilers. At the beginning of 1923, after the Fourth Comintern Congress had decided the issue, the existing illegal organisations disbanded their sections within the Workers' Party, which thereby became the United States section of the Comintern (see Draper 1957, pp. 353–95).

340 Johanningsmeier 1994, pp. 188–90.

341 RGASPI 534/3/9/198.

342 RGASPI 534/3/29/68. Johanningsmeier equates the connection established between Lozovsky and Foster in summer 1921 with the RILU's later position of exclusive support for the TUEL. This is to overlook the temporising attitude of the RILU at that time. Draper makes a similar mistake (Draper 1957, p. 321).

important step in this direction.³⁴³ But since this organisation was linked with a group that had split from the communist party, the United Toilers, and since it had also rejected the idea of fractional work within the AFL, it soon became clear that it could expect at best toleration from the RILU. Hence the Executive Bureau took note of the formation of the United Labor Council, but it sent a message of solidarity to the TUEL after its founding congress in response to a police raid it had just suffered, which left no doubt about its sympathy with the latter.³⁴⁴

This does not exhaust the list of connections that the RILU had in the USA. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America (ACWA) seemed to be a promising contact. This union did not join the AFL until 1933. It was an influential organisation of workers in the men's clothing industry, which had arisen in 1914 from a split in the corresponding AFL-affiliated union.³⁴⁵ It was strongly linked to the Jewish socialist milieu in New York, and its chairman Sidney Hillman had visited Russia in 1921. He had been received by Lenin and, as we have already noted, he had also played some part in organising famine relief activities.

The RILU paid particular attention to courting the ACWA. On 20 May 1922, the Executive Bureau decided to invite it to the next RILU congress, along with other independent trade unions.³⁴⁶ A little later, the ACWA conference voted to help the reconstruction of the Russian clothing industry and expressed its enthusiasm over the greetings the RILU had sent.³⁴⁷ The ACWA leadership now entered into an alliance for a short period with the TUEL.³⁴⁸ The TUEL's adherents in that organisation gave Hillman their support and abandoned the idea of setting up their own groups within it, as had been done in other trade unions. 'The alliance between the ACWA leadership and the left in the TUEL was essentially based on joint support for Soviet Russia, the principle of industrial trade unionism and the amalgamation and formation of an independent work-

343 'Vers l'Unité Ouvrière', *La Vie Ouvrière*, no. 141, 13 January 1922; *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 145–6; Cannon 1962, p. 193; Draper 1960, pp. 22 and 216; and Buhle 1995, pp. 101–2.

344 RGASPI 534/3/23/108, 138, 188 and 196, and 'An die Liga für Gewerkschaftspropaganda', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, October 1922, p. 696.

345 No history of the ACWA has yet been written. Elements of the story are to be found in Fraser's biography of Hillman, its long-serving chairman (Fraser 1993).

346 RGASPI 534/3/23/127.

347 Hillman, *Reconstruction*; A.A. 'Die Konferenz des Vereinigten Verbandes der Herrschneider', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 376–8.

348 On this alliance, see Melech Epstein, *Jewish Labor in the U.S.A.*, vol. 2, 1914–1952, New York, 1953, pp. 163–8; Fraser 1993, pp. 178–97; and Foner 1991, vol. 9, pp. 302–7.

ers' party'.³⁴⁹ It had its basis in the complex divisions of the Jewish left, which Hillman and his associates had been able to bring to the point of opposing the Jewish social democrats but never far enough to get the ACWA leaders to join the communists (or even the RILU, for they did not send a delegate to its second congress).³⁵⁰ After 1924, in the midst of conflicts over the choice of a left-wing candidate for the presidency and the conduct of strikes, the alliance between the ACWA and the TUEL fell apart. Hillman, however, was able to retain control over his own organisation, and it became a major supporter of the CIO after 1935.

The RILU displayed clear sympathy for the TUEL on the eve of its second congress, since its fractional work in the AFL corresponded well with the course prescribed by the previous congress. In view of the various different forms of revolutionary trade-union work that were in progress, however, the Executive Bureau was unable to avoid calling for 'the creation of a solid left *bloc* within the American trade union movement, which would unite on the one hand the independent left trade unions and on the other hand the left opposition

349 Foner 1991, vol. 9, p. 305. The United Toilers, who had split away from the communist party, attempted to build an opposition in the ACWA, but without success (Foner 1991, vol. 9, p. 303).

350 One reason for the communists' hopes was that the second most important person in the ACWA leadership, Joseph Schlossberg, had once been a member of DeLeon's SLP, and was an old acquaintance of Boris Reinstein. Reinstein met him again in summer 1922 (as well as Hillman) when he visited the USA as part of a Comintern delegation and recommended him warmly (RGASPI 534/3/23/159 and RGASPI 534/3/29/88). The ACWA leadership also provided the financial support needed to start the Yiddish-language communist newspaper *Morgen Freiheit* in 1922, as it was a counterweight to the social-democratic Yiddish paper *Forverts*, which took a very negative attitude to the ACWA, describing it as pro-communist. The RILU was also interested in another trade union from the same milieu. The chairman of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU), which belonged to the AFL, had already visited Russia before Hillman, after attending the congress of the International Federation of Clothing Workers in Copenhagen in summer 1920: 'Benjamin Schlesinger went to Moscow in 1921, exchanged kisses with Lenin, and promised substantial economic assistance, but apart from helping to relieve the famine in the Volga area the ILGWU did nothing' (Epstein 1953, vol. 2, p. 164). He published a series of detailed articles on his trip in the union's newspaper, *Justice*, between November 1920 and January 1921, under the title 'Five Weeks in Soviet Russia'. The ILGWU was also one of the trade unions invited to the second RILU congress, but it did not come. Apart from anything else, its leadership, which consisted mostly of socialists, unlike the ACWA, very quickly became caught up in a severe conflict with the TUEL fraction (Epstein 1953, vol. 2, pp. 124–34; Foner 1991, vol. 9, pp. 369–86). This escalated in the mid-twenties into the veritable civil war between the two wings of the trade union.

within the unions affiliated to the American Federation of Labour'.³⁵¹ But since competing conceptions of trade-union work underlay this organisational fragmentation, it was already certain that there would be disagreements over the recognition of mandates at the next RILU congress.

The initial situation in Australia was similar: a numerically weak communist party, with only a few hundred members, which split into two parties immediately after its foundation in October 1920, confronted a strong trade-union movement.³⁵² The former Wobbly, Paul Freeman, who had been sent out to Australia from Moscow (he had arrived in Russia in summer 1920 with Souchy and was at first entirely syndicalist in his attitude, but then changed his views fundamentally under the impression of his experiences, as would happen later with Hardy and Barker as well), succeeded by the beginning of 1921 in organising Australian delegations to both the founding congress of the RILU and the Third Comintern Congress.³⁵³ The two rival communist parties, however, continued to confront each other in irreconcilable mutual hostility.

One of these rival groups had an advantage which finally brought recognition by the Comintern: it essentially comprised activists in the trade-union movement in Sydney and more generally New South Wales, who had key positions in the Labor Council, which combined together the trade unions of the state. They were known as the Trades Hall Reds.³⁵⁴ Their dominant personality was the secretary of the council, Jock Garden. The chair of the Labor Council, J. Howie, had been a delegate to the founding congress of the RILU and had published a report on it.³⁵⁵

These trade-union associations in each federal state were at that time the sole form of overarching regional organisation. The Labor Council of New

351 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 146.

352 On the emergence of communism in Australia, see Miriam Disson, 'Reformists and Revolutionaries in New South Wales 1920–1922', *Politics*, no. 2, November 1966, pp. 135–51; J. Normington-Rawling, 'Foundation of the Communist Party of Australia', *Quadrant*, no. 5, 1964, pp. 71–7; and Frank Farrell, *International Socialism and Australian Labour: The Left in Australia*, Sydney, 1981, pp. 40–53.

353 Farrell 1981, pp. 55–6, and Bertha Walker, *Solidarity Forever*, Melbourne, 1972, pp. 178–81. The Bolsheviks evidently had great hopes of Freeman. He became a candidate for the ECCI at the Third Comintern Congress, but lost his life at the end of July 1921 in a railway disaster, along with Artem-Sergeev and a number of foreign delegates to the RILU congress (see chapter 4, section 8).

354 See Raymond Markey, *In Case of Oppression: The Life and Times of the Labor Council of New South Wales*, Leichhardt, 1994, particularly pp. 228–41.

355 Farrell 1981, p. 56, and J. Howie, *Reds in Congress: First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions. Moscow, July 3rd, 1921*, Sydney, 1921.

South Wales had organised all-Australian conferences in June 1921 and again in July 1922 at which it attempted to establish a trade-union federation.³⁵⁶ The relevant decisions, however, remained on paper. Not the least of the reasons for this delay was that the Trades Hall Reds wanted to combine trade-union unification with a restructuring on the basis of the industrial principle ('One Big Union') and the adoption of a socialist programme by the workers' movement. They also opposed the 'White Australia policy' of preventing non-white immigration which was propagated by the Labour Party and some of the larger trade unions. It was not in fact until 1927 that it proved possible to establish a general federation, which was given the name 'Australasian Council of Trade Unions' (ACTU).

The Trades Hall Reds did at least manage to get the Labor Council of New South Wales to affiliate to the RILU, in February 1922.³⁵⁷ This did not go unnoticed in Moscow.³⁵⁸ The congress of Australian trade unions held in July 1922 was also invited to declare its affiliation. The letter from Moscow arrived after the congress had already come to an end, however.³⁵⁹ One result of the close co-operation between the Trades Hall Reds, the communist party and the RILU was that a small group of former activists of the Australian IWW, who had taken part in founding the communist party in autumn 1920 and had initially supported the Trades Hall Reds in the factional struggles that followed, now left the communist party, since they rejected fractional work in the existing trade unions, even when combined with the advocacy of industrial unionism. In 1921–2, they set up the Industrial Union Propaganda League, which briefly declared its support for the RILU but then went over to making unsuccessful attempts to resuscitate the IWW.³⁶⁰

356 'Der australische Gewerkschaftskongreß', *Rote Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 9, 17 December 1921, and Jim Hagen, *The History of the A.C.T.U.*, Melbourne, 1981, pp. 22–6.

357 Farrell 1981, p. 61, and Markey 1994, p. 230.

358 'Die Gewerkschaften von Neu-Süd-Wales für die RGI', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 224–5.

359 'Begrüssungsschreiben an den Gewerkschaftskongreß in Australien', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 405–6, and Farrell 1981, pp. 102–3.

360 Farrell 1981, pp. 59–60, and Verity Burgman, *Revolutionary Industrial Unionism. The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia*, Cambridge-Melbourne, 1995, pp. 246–52. Members of the IWW had been severely persecuted in Australia in 1916 owing to their opposition to the war (and above all for their active role in the campaign against conscription). They were accused, among other things, of having planned to set Sydney on fire. Important IWW activists who were not of Australian birth, such as Paul Freeman and Tom Barker, were forcibly expelled from the country. This led to the collapse of the organisation. Towards the end of the war, small IWW circles re-formed, one of which temporarily went over to the

It must be admitted that the RILU did not at first attach great importance to developments on the Australian continent, as is shown by the fact that Australia is not even mentioned in the Executive Council's report on its activities to the second congress. The RILU had nevertheless gained a real point of support there which attained special significance in the middle of the 1920s when it took up the idea of Pan-Pacific trade-union co-operation, which had first been launched in Australia. Although Garden and other Trades Hall Reds had already left the party by the mid-1920s, co-operation between the RILU and the Labor Council continued until 1930–1.

The RILU, as we have seen, competed with its social-democratic rival in areas it already occupied, but it clearly differed from the IFTU in attempting to organise the trade-union movements which had only just arisen in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, above all in the Far East. Its predecessor, the ITUC, had already taken the first steps in this direction. Immediately after the end of the founding congress of the RILU, the Executive Bureau conducted discussions with delegates from Japan, Korea and China.³⁶¹ Even though the Far Eastern Bureau was soon declared defunct, the contacts that had been established continued to be pursued. This also applied to the Near East. The Turkestan Bureau of the VTsSPS was given the task of seeking out contacts with the countries bordering Soviet Russia.³⁶² Contacts were in fact established with Persia and Egypt, and also further east, with India and Japan.³⁶³ The training of communist trade-union cadres was taken in hand, as is shown by the fact that the Executive Bureau had already decided in August 1921 to co-operate closely with the Communist University of Toilers of the East, which had been set up in April in Moscow to prepare communist cadres from the Asiatic countries for political work.³⁶⁴

These activities were given extra impetus by the Congress of Toilers of the Far East organised by the Comintern as a reply to the Washington Conference of the

communist party precisely because of the orientation of the ITUC towards industrial unionism, and among other activities published the 'Open Letter' that the Comintern sent to the IWW of the USA.

361 RGASPI 534/3/9/6, 9, and 21–2.

362 RGASPI 534/3/9/45.

363 RGASPI 534/3/9/76, 205, and 211; RGASPI 534/3/23/15–16; and 'Aufruf an die japanischen Arbeiter', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, 1 October 1921, pp. 45–50.

364 RGASPI 534/3/9/71. On this institution, see Carr 1953, vol. 3, pp. 268–9. There is an account of it by a former student, who admittedly worked in the party organisation rather than the trade unions, in Claude Cadart and Cheng Yingsiang, *Mémoires de Peng Shuzhi. L'Envol du communisme en Chine*, Paris, 1983, pp. 263–76.

Pacific powers (from which Soviet Russia had been excluded). This took place in Moscow and Petrograd between 21 January and 2 February 1922.³⁶⁵ Admittedly, the fight against imperialism and the establishment of communist parties occupied the central position in its proceedings, but Lozovsky also presented the greetings of the RILU³⁶⁶ and the congress provided an opportunity for a discussion with its trade-union delegates.³⁶⁷ Delegates from Korea, Japan, China and Indonesia provided extensive information on the situation in their countries. Lozovsky summed up the results in a statement to the Soviet trade-union newspaper *Trud* on 22 February: 'The significance of the Congress of Toilers of the Far East and its special trade union section is very great because it brought together the Profintern and the workers' organisations of the Far East'.³⁶⁸

The second session of the Central Council of the RILU, which was meeting at the same time, expressed its delight at the 'increasing significance of the workers' movement of the industrialising East', and pointed out 'the necessity for a special bureau for the Far East ... in order to develop and lead broad-based agitational activity among the workers of the East'.³⁶⁹ The Executive Bureau initially entrusted the trade-union leadership of the Soviet Republic of the Far East with the task of representing it towards China, Japan and Korea. This was to take place, however, in close collaboration with the Comintern (with joint representation), just as had happened already in 1921 with the delegation

365 On this congress, see Carr 1953, vol. 3, pp. 525–8. There are reports by participants in Chang Kuo-t'ao, *The Rise of the Chinese Communist Party 1921–1927. Volume One of the Autobiography*, Lawrence, 1971, pp. 161–3 and 177–218, and Cadart and Yingsiang 1983, pp. 294–304. The minutes were published as *The First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East*, Petrograd, 1922.

366 *The First Congress* 1922, pp. 9–10.

367 A. Rosmer, 'Moscou, Février 1922. Première journée', *La lutte de classe*, no. 1, 5 May 1922; and 'Gewerkschaftsfragen des Fernen Ostens', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 214–16.

368 As quoted in Carr 1972, p. 622. As an example of the connections established as a result of this discussion, see the comments in McVey, pp. 211–12 on the revolutionary national trade-union centre of Indonesia (also described as Dutch East India following the official designation current at the time, and also simply as Java), which was represented at the Moscow meeting by a delegate. See also the Indonesian union's declaration of affiliation to the RILU, 'Brief des revolutionären Gewerkschaftszentrums Holländisch-Ostindiens', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 2, February 1922, p. 149.

369 'Resolution zum Tätigkeitsbericht des Vollzugsbüros der RGI', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 231–2. There was also a meeting of transport workers of the East on the fringe of the Central Council sittings; this was the first step towards the later Pan-Pacific activities of the RILU (on this, see chapter 6, section 4).

of a representative of the ITUC, and would also happen in the future.³⁷⁰ The proclamations of the RILU to the trade-union movements of India, Japan and China were a further expression of its intensified activities in the region.³⁷¹

The discussions which took place in the context of the Congress of Toilers of the Far East were largely organised by the head of the Eastern Section of the RILU apparatus, Khaim Eidus, who followed developments in those countries intensively, and repeatedly directed the attention of the RILU to the struggles taking place there, for example the seamen's strike in Hong Kong at the beginning of 1922, which was the first step towards a tremendous upsurge of the Chinese workers' movement and therefore formed a preparatory stage to the revolution of 1925 to 1927.³⁷²

In Mexico, events unfolded differently. The RILU's contact with the CROM, which covered the majority of the organised workers, resulted entirely from the latter's own initiative. Its rival, the Mexican CGT, had been a member of the RILU from the beginning, having been represented at the founding congress, but, as noted earlier, it withdrew soon afterwards from that organisation on account of its anarcho-syndicalist views. The CROM was founded in 1918 and its unquestioned leader was Luis Morones. Despite verbal undertones recalling its anarchist origins its orientation was completely reformist. It was tied into the post-revolutionary system through its close alliance with President Obregón, whose term of office lasted from 1920–4, and it had declared its opposition to communism. It had also created its own political party in the shape of the *Partido Laborista Mexicano*, which was a part of the government coalition, and would be represented yet more strongly under the presidency of Obregón's successor Calles between 1924–8. It was protected by the state against its left-wing competitors, the CGT and some independent trade unions, in exchange

370 RGASPI 534/3/23/42–3 and 58. Thus Sneevliet, who had arrived in Moscow at the beginning of 1922 to report on Indonesia, was sent back explicitly as the representative of both the Comintern and the RILU. See the mandate printed in Saich 1991, vol. 1, pp. 325–6.

371 *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, p. 240 and no. 4, April 1922, pp. 324–5.

372 Ch. E. 'Der Streik der Hongkonger Seeleute', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, pp. 296–7. On this, see the report of the leading communist trade-union organiser in China at that time, Deng Zhongxia (1975, pp. 34–52) and the scholarly discussion by Jean Chesneaux (1962, pp. 267–8). In May 1922, the Workers' Secretariat set up by the Chinese communist party called the first trade-union congress, which met in Guangzhou (Canton). This did not, it is true, establish a trade-union federation, but it did manage to issue an extensive list of demands. (See Deng Zhongxia 1975, pp. 53–61 and Chesneaux 1962, pp. 268–71. There is a brief account of the resolutions passed by this congress in Chesneaux (ed.) 1965, pp. 125–31).

for supporting the government. Morones was the Minister of Labour, and his governmental function enabled him to triumph over his trade-union critics within the confederation.³⁷³ At the same time, the CROM had entered into a close alliance with the AFL under Gompers, and in 1918 it had founded, together with the AFL, the Pan-American Federation of Labor (PAFL), or, in Spanish, the *Confederación Obrera Pan-Americana* (COPA).³⁷⁴

In summer 1921, the CROM held a congress at which it decided to make contact with the Comintern and the RILU, and in October 1921, to everyone's surprise, two representatives of the CROM suddenly appeared in Moscow. One of them was the CROM's General Secretary, Eulalio Martínez. He gave a detailed description of the situation in Mexico to the Executive Bureau, and asked officially about the conditions under which the CROM could affiliate to the RILU. The Executive Bureau summarised them in three points: acceptance of the decisions of the founding congress, a merger with the CGT, a break with the reformist elements at the top of the CROM, and, very definitely, a break with Gompers. Martínez made a non-committal reply. The CROM was

373 Overall coverage of the CROM is provided by the following works: Favio Barbosa Cano, *La CROM. De Luis Morones a Antonio J. Hernández*, Puebla, 1980; Tamayo 1987, vol. 7, pp. 51–114; José Rivera Castro, *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, vol. 8, *En la presidencia de Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–1928)*, Mexico, D.F., 1983, pp. 17–111; and Hans Werner Tobler, *Die mexikanische Revolution. Gesellschaftlicher Wandel und politischer Umbruch 1876–1940*, Frankfurt-am-Main, 1984, pp. 341–3, 353 and 486–94. Only after 1928, under President Portes Gil, was the CROM forced to the margins of politics. Then, in 1935–6, during the presidency of Cárdenas, a new trade-union confederation, the *Confederación de Trabajadores de México*, was created by Leonardo Toledano in association with the communist trade unions out of groupings that had split from the CROM. This too became built into the state apparatus, though not in entirely the same way. The RILU gave its support to the new confederation shortly before its final demise. Although Mexico's post-revolutionary system cannot be compared unreservedly with the Populist regimes of later decades, this incorporation of trade unions into the state displays some similarities to the system of labour relations established under Perón in Argentina or Vargas in Brazil, though of course Perón and Vargas repressed left-wing trade unionism much more strongly than the Mexican presidents did. The European social democrats saw the growing role of the CROM and the *Partido Laborista*, particularly under Calles, as a development comparable with social-democratic participation in their own governments. Kautsky, for example, said that in Mexico the working class was already ruling the state. In line with this approach, the IFTU was also very favourable towards the CROM.

374 On this organisation, see Sinclair Snow, *The Pan-American Federation of Labor*, Durham, 1964, and Levenstein 1971. The PAFL could list an impressive number of member organisations on paper, but only the AFL and the CROM were of any real significance.

a revolutionary group, he said, so it could have nothing against the decisions of the RILU congress. The breach with the CGT had come about only for reasons connected with the 'personalities' of certain CGT leaders. The RILU might perhaps be able to contribute to a reunification by mediating. He also saw no difficulty in agreeing to the break with Gompers that was demanded. But his answer contained no concrete promises. The Executive Bureau thereupon sent a letter to the CROM, asking it to commit itself unambiguously. This did not happen, however.³⁷⁵

There is no doubt that the anti-communist leadership of the CROM around Morones had absolutely no real intention of affiliating to the RILU. It was repeatedly castigated in articles in the RILU press organ for its 'yellow' attitude. One was written by Fraina, who had been sent to Mexico earlier by the ITUC. On the other hand, it was also noted that a number of local organisations attached to the CROM were strongly sympathetic to the RILU.³⁷⁶ Precisely this fact was probably the reason for the Martínez mission: an initiative of this kind would serve to head off internal pressure.

In reality, the CROM leadership was following the two-track policy for which Díaz Ramírez denounced it: it had 'one foot in Moscow and the other foot in Amsterdam'.³⁷⁷ Thus Díaz Ramírez was not admitted as a guest to the congress of the *Partido Laborista*, and Martínez proclaimed that the goal in Mexico was not a dictatorship of the proletariat, but anarchy. Nevertheless, in September a congress of the CROM confirmed that attempts should be made to co-operate with Moscow. The congress had before it an invitation from the RILU to take part in its second congress, to which the CROM had replied with an appropriate letter. Shortly after this, Morones set off for Europe. There he succeeded in getting into conversation with the leaders of the IFTU, while the International Labour Organisation was in session in Geneva. Then, in December, he took part in the Peace Congress organised by the IFTU at The Hague, and had a long discussion with its leadership (this led to an invitation to European trade-union

375 RGASPI 534/3/9/137 and 147–8; 'Brief an die Arbeiter Mexikos', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, 15 November 1921, pp. 362–3; Tamayo 1987, vol. 7, pp. 113–14; Castro 1983, vol. 8, pp. 53–4; and Taibo II 1986, p. 157. It was typical of the communication difficulties the Executive Bureau faced at that time that its letter, sent in November, only became known in Mexico in March (Taibo II 1986, p. 360).

376 'Die gewerkschaftliche und politische Bewegung in Mexiko', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, 29 October 1921, pp. 310–12, and Fraina, 'Der Kampf um den Anschluß an die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, January 1922, pp. 48–9.

377 As quoted in Taibo II 1986, p. 157.

leaders to visit Mexico, which could not take place until three years later owing to political circumstances). He also wanted to go to Russia, but he was refused permission to enter.³⁷⁸

After this, the CROM leadership concentrated on establishing connections with the IFTU, which it made use of after 1924 to offer itself as an international mediator, in the framework of the 'unity line' that had now been adopted by the RILU and Soviet trade unions. In this context, the CROM made another advance to the RILU in 1925–6, again with a visit by Martínez to Moscow.

Another question emerged in connection with this contact between the RILU and Mexico: Katayama, no doubt encouraged by the pan-American connections of the CROM,³⁷⁹ suggested to the Executive Bureau in a letter sent in

378 Taibo II 1986, p. 158; *Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 250, 25 November 1922; *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB* 1922–23, p. 14; RGASPI 534/3/23/165; J.H. Retinger, *Morones of Mexico. A History of the Labour Movement in that Country*, London, 1926, p. 45. In mid-November, a telegram reached the Executive Bureau announcing that a delegate from Mexico – evidently Morones – was on his way to the RILU congress, and this was taken note of without any further decision (RGASPI 534/3/23/235). It has not been possible to establish why he was not given a visa. One cannot, however, exclude the possibility that there were no political reasons involved, and that it was simply a case of bureaucratic inefficiency, just as had happened the previous year with the leader of the US Metalworkers' Union. Morones had already visited Europe once before, in 1919. He had clearly not been able to get in contact with the IFTU on that occasion, because he did not mention a previous meeting in a report published in the IFTU organ after his second visit (L.N. Morones and J.H. Retinger, 'Die Entwicklung der Arbeiterbewegung in Mexiko', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 3, May–June 1923, pp. 131–53, here p. 142). Retinger too (1926, p. 43) refers to this 1919 visit by Morones to Europe without mentioning any discussions with the IFTU, adding that in 1919 the European trade-union movement had as yet no understanding of the Mexican situation. This was shown, Retinger said, by the fact that Morones was not only not admitted to the Washington Labour Conference at the end of the year, but the representatives at the conference had no interest in talking to him. (Retinger was a European socialist who had come into contact with Morones in Mexico and became his adviser chiefly on international matters).

379 The idea of establishing pan-American connections had other supporters as well. When the syndicalist FORA entered the IFTU in 1919 it was agreed that a South American congress of trade unionists should be called to set up a regional organisation, although this organisation never actually came into existence (Marotta 1960, vol. 2, p. 280). The anarchist FORA, too, repeatedly called for South American co-operation at its congresses, and it did indeed take part in meetings with this purpose, but they all ended without success. Not until May 1929, almost at the same time as the corresponding RILU organisation was founded, did the Latin American anarcho-syndicalists join together by forming the *Asociación Continental Americana de los Trabajadores* (ACAT). (Abad de Santillán 1971, pp. 237–9, 254, 265 and 281–3, and López 1987, vol. 1, pp. 57–9, 113 and 123).

October 1921, shortly before he left Mexico, that it seize the initiative and establish a Latin American federation of trade unions. The idea was at first rejected emphatically. A separate organisation of this kind, it was said, would 'become isolated from the workers' movements of other countries'. Two months later, however, the idea was again put forward energetically, both by Katayama, who had now arrived in Moscow, and by Fraina, in a letter. This time the Executive Bureau accepted the proposal, and it was intended that it would be given a more concrete form at a joint meeting with the ECCI.³⁸⁰ For the moment, the decision was not followed up. Not until towards the end of the 1920s did the idea of a Latin American trade-union federation resurface.³⁸¹

The Central Council met for its second session between 17 February and 5 March 1922, and it made a provisional evaluation of the organisational and political state of the RILU, in line with the provisions of the statutes.³⁸² Since nothing was published about the session, apart from some survey articles, and since only fragments of the minutes have survived in the RILU archive, almost nothing can be said about the course of its discussions.³⁸³ The agenda for the

380 RGASPI 534/3/9/169 and RGASPI 534/2/23/8.

381 The RILU did, however, succeed in establishing direct contact with Brazil on the eve of the second congress, when Canelas arrived to take part in the Fourth Comintern Congress. He spoke to the Executive Bureau on 5 October 1922 about the situation in his country, where there was still no national trade-union centre. (Attempts to establish a centre continued to be foiled in the next few years by state measures of repression). (RGASPI 534/3/23/199; Antonio Kanelas [sic! – R.T.], 'Die Arbeiterbewegung', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 10, October 1922, pp. 654–5; and chapter 3, section 6 of this book).

382 According to the statutes, the Central Council was obliged to meet twice a year. It met for the first time directly after the founding congress, hence six months before this second meeting, but it would not again assemble before the second RILU congress took place at the end of 1922.

383 There are three sheets in the RILU archive, containing a speech by Reinstein and the closing address by Lozovsky. Apart from that, there are records of resolutions, messages of greeting and lists of Central Council members and other representatives (RGASPI 534/2/1–2). The agenda item on the relationship with the syndicalists was, however, documented by the NAS delegation in their report (*Rapport delegatie N.A.S. van de zittinden van den Centralen Raad der Roode VakInternationale op 30 Januari 1922 en volgende dagen te Moskou*, Amsterdam, 1922). There is a summary of the most important results of the Central Council in A. Losowsky, 'Ergebnisse und Perspektiven (Über die Arbeiten des Zentralrates der R.G.I.)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 159–64. Its resolutions are printed on pp. 231–8 of the same issue. Apart from this, we have drawn on the following press articles: 'Von der Plenarsitzung des Zentralrates der RGI', *Inprekorr*, no. 33, 21 March 1922; 'Zweite Plenarsitzung des Rates der Roten Gew-

session consisted of: the report of the Executive Bureau (given by Lozovsky), reports from individual countries,³⁸⁴ items on 'the offensive of capital and the united front' (reporters Lozovsky and Brandler),³⁸⁵ 'Amsterdam's policy of splitting' (Rosmer), 'the International Propaganda Committees' (Rubinstein) and 'the relationship with the syndicalists' (Andreytchine and Nin), a report on the VTsSPS plenum held in February and finally elections. 34 delegates and five guests took part, mainly from European countries; extra-European representatives came from the USA, Australia, and five Asian countries. The first Enlarged ECCI Plenum (24 February to 4 March 1922) took place almost simultaneously with the Central Council session. It concerned itself above all with the united front policy, but also discussed the 'struggle of the communists in the trade unions' as that agenda item was entitled.³⁸⁶

The main result of the Central Council session was to strengthen the existence of the RILU as an organisation, which was not in fact jeopardised by the adoption of the united front policy, as the rejection of 'liquidationist' impulses in Germany and Italy demonstrated.³⁸⁷ The Central Council did admittedly compromise with the Norwegians in their attempts to mediate to the extent

erkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 108, 4 March 1922; 'Die Februarsitzung der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Fahne*, no. 144, 25 March 1922; and 'Die Februarsitzung der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 12, 25 March 1922.

384 Some of the country reports were published in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*.

385 Lozovsky's report was probably largely identical to the pamphlet he wrote at the beginning of February (A. Losowsky, *Die Weltoffensive des Kapitals und die proletarische Einheitsfront*, Berlin, 1922), which also contained the resolution of the Central Council and the correspondence with the IFTU on the attempt to avoid a split in the CGT. Lozovsky and Brandler also submitted similar reports to the ECCI Plenum, which was sitting almost concurrently. (See the next footnote).

386 The minutes of the ECCI Plenum were printed as *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale gegen die Offensive des Kapitals. Bericht über die Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, vom 24. Februar bis 4. März 1922*, Hamburg, 1922. *Der Kampf der Kommunisten in den Gewerkschaften 1922* contains the speeches of Lozovsky and Brandler on the trade-union question. The ECCI Plenum set up a committee to work out a resolution on work in the trade unions. Its resolution was adopted without opposition, with the PCF delegation abstaining. Lozovsky and Brandler were members of the committee. This showed once again how closely the Comintern and the RILU were meshed together. (*Die Taktik 1922*, pp. 129 and 149, and, for the resolution, 'Der Kampf der Kommunisten', in *Die Taktik 1922*, pp. 34–6).

387 See 'Resolution zum Tätigkeitsbericht des Vollzugsbüros der RGI' and 'Die Offensive des Kapitals und die proletarische Einheitsfront', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 231–4.

that it declared itself ready in principle to have joint discussions with all workers' organisations, even with Amsterdam.³⁸⁸ But all organisations attached to the RILU were exhorted not to take any initiative of this kind without discussing it first with the Executive Bureau. In any case, any united front endeavours, it said, would have to be directed towards setting in motion actual struggles. The Amsterdam leaders would increasingly have recourse to the tactic of splitting, it was added, so that it would be necessary to fight even more strongly in defence of unity, or, as in France, for reunification.³⁸⁹ For the moment this remained a rather vague slogan. It would be some time before it became central to the RILU's propaganda.

The confrontation with Amsterdam also determined the way the International Propaganda Committees dealt with the International Trade Secretariats. Here the Central Council was forced to recognise that the ITSS had now entered into emphatic opposition to all revolutionary trade unions, the Russian ones first and foremost, in accordance with their connection to the IFTU. It decided, however, to continue its attempts to gain influence, without pushing for the formation of separate ITSS. Its main instruction to the IPCs was that they intensify their propaganda activities.³⁹⁰ (On this point see the next section as well). The Council appealed to the syndicalists not to set up an international of their own, as they had been trying to do since the Düsseldorf conference of the FAUD in October 1921, but rather to take part in the next RILU congress.³⁹¹

The final item on the agenda was clearly the future composition of the Executive Bureau, as appears from one of the few fragments of the minutes that have been preserved. According to this document, Reinstein reported that Tom Mann did not feel able to take a leading position, owing to his age.³⁹² This sitting of the Central Council was also confronted with the decision of the Politbureau of the RCP (b) to replace Lozovsky with Rudzutak. As mentioned earlier, a protest by a number of non-Russian leaders of the RILU led the Politbureau to change its mind. Hence this session of the Central Council did not after all result in any changes in the composition of the RILU's Executive Bureau.

388 'Der Zentralrat der RGI zur Einberufung einer internationalen Konferenz', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, p. 237.

389 'Über die Spaltungsarbeit der Amsterdamer', *ibid.*

390 'Resolution zu dem Bericht über die Internationalen Propaganda-Komitees', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 234–6.

391 'Die revolutionären Syndikalisten und die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, p. 234.

392 RGASPI 534/2/1/1.

According to Lozovsky, the proceedings of the Central Council had definitely confirmed that the RILU now stood on a 'firm foundation'. But he had to admit that 'the belief in reformism is disappearing more slowly than we would wish' and that 'in many countries the Amsterdam International is stronger than we are'.³⁹³ Whether the 'disappearance of reformist influence' was really irresistible, so that the RILU possessed, as it were, a guarantee that its own influence would increase, was a question the future would decide. It was manifestly obvious that the RILU had only managed to a limited extent to bring together 'the non-communist elements, for example the syndicalists or those who are in opposition in Amsterdam unions, who are not yet communists and who are not yet ready to fight with communist methods for communist goals', as claimed by Brandler.³⁹⁴

The second RILU congress, which was supposed to take place in 1922 according to the statutes, convened slightly over half a year after the Central Council session. In April, it was set to begin on 25 October, but two months later it was postponed until 20 November, while the Fourth Comintern Congress was set to start at the beginning of that month.³⁹⁵ This once again demonstrates the close link between the two internationals, because the postponement ensured that the Comintern would be able to take the relevant decisions beforehand, and the RILU would then simply have to execute them. The Fourth Comintern Congress met from 5 November to 5 December, and it discussed the 'Tasks of Communists in the Trade Unions' on 20–21 November. It is true that the RILU congress had already begun by then, on 19 November, but it did not begin serious work until 21 November, after the Comintern had ended its discussion on the trade unions.

The Executive Bureau had already decided in May to send separate invitations to a number of left-wing trade unions which stood outside the RILU, including the organisations of men's and women's clothing workers from the USA, as already mentioned, and also the Scottish TUC and the Italian railway workers (who were not affiliated to either of the country's national trade-union centres).³⁹⁶ But the RILU did not succeed in broadening its spectrum in this way, as none of the extra trade unions it had invited sent any delegates.

393 A. Losowsky, 'Ergebnisse und Perspektiven (Über die Arbeiten des Zentralrates der R.G.I.)', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 159 and 164.

394 These words come from his report to the ECCI Plenum ('Der Kampf der Kommunisten', *Die Taktik* 1922, p. 24). He probably expressed himself in identical or similar terms at the Central Council session.

395 RGASPI 534/3/23/102 and 136.

396 RGASPI 534/3/23/127.

Preparations for the congress were in full swing from the end of September onwards. Lozovsky was asked to provide a detailed report of the Executive Bureau's activities, and to have it translated into numerous languages. This had already been done by the end of October.³⁹⁷ The agenda proposed by the Executive Bureau, however, had to be altered repeatedly.³⁹⁸ In particular, a number of major keynote speakers, such as Rosmer, Monatte, Foster and Mann, turned out to be unavailable. This made it extremely difficult to draw up the theses relating to the individual agenda items.

A considerable part of the preparatory work was assigned to the Central European Bureau.³⁹⁹ This applied not just to the organisation of the delegates' travel arrangements. It was also asked to make sure that thorough reports were presented on the state of trade-union work in each case.⁴⁰⁰

At the end of September, a mandate committee was set up in Moscow, the purpose of which was to establish, as on the previous occasion, what organisation the delegates who were arriving represented, and to lay doubtful cases before the congress. It was expected to work closely with the analogous committee of the Comintern. It turned out to have so much work to do that extra members were added to it two weeks before the congress was due to begin.⁴⁰¹ There was now a statute in place, as there had not been at the founding congress of course, which prescribed a fixed formula for the distribution of votes. Voting rights were assigned according to the organisation's claimed membership, and according to whether it was an individual organisation, a national centre or a minority within the union in question. National delegations were to be formed beforehand, and the votes were divided proportionally within them. One disputed point, which had been one of the additional arguments put forward by the syndicalist opposition at the previous congress, was now cleared up by the decision that the trade unions of the autonomous Soviet republics were members of the RILU not in their own right but through their membership of the VTsSPS.⁴⁰²

397 RGASPI 534/3/23/165, RGASPI 534/3/23/216, and *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus 1921–1922*.

398 RGASPI 534/3/23/193–4, 210–11 and 232.

399 RGASPI 534/3/23/149.

400 See the thorough survey, including reports on individual countries, and lists of addresses and publications, in 'Aus der Roten Gewerkschaftsbewegung (Nach den beim MEB eingelaufenen Berichten)', *Inprekorr*, no. 205, 26 October 1922, pp. 1391–402.

401 RGASPI 534/3/23/195, 207 and 235.

402 Characteristically, this decision was made by the Orgbureau of the RCP, although the compromise was based on a suggestion made by Lozovsky in a letter of 3 May 1922 to the Politbureau (RGASPI 5/2/227/19–20 and RGASPI 534/8/11/19).

The fundamental conflict over the connection between the RILU and the Communist International, which had dominated the first congress, had not yet reached a conclusion. Even before the congress assembled, the CGTU had made its further membership in the organisation dependent on a favourable settlement of this dispute. Nevertheless, it was clear that a narrower spectrum of opinion would be represented at the second congress. Those syndicalists who were not prepared to co-operate with the communists – either because of the ‘organic link’ of the RILU with the Comintern and the communist party, or because of the communist demand for fractional work within the reformist trade unions – had already made it clear that they were now going to pursue their own international project. The decision, made early on, to distribute the minutes in French, German and English among the appropriate delegations in typewritten rather than printed copies was a sign that the organisers expected a narrower group of participants this time.⁴⁰³ The day before the congress opened, on 18 November, the Executive Bureau held a final meeting, at which it decided on the members of the Congress Presidium and the Congress committees, as well as making last-minute changes to the agenda and the list of keynote speakers.⁴⁰⁴

4 **The International Trade Secretariats and the International Propaganda Committees, 1921–2**

The International Propaganda Committees had been set up in the expectation that they would be the lever that would serve to revolutionise the International Trade Secretariats. This hope very soon turned out to be illusory, because the IPCs stood on far too narrow a basis. Outside Russia, the communist-led trade unions either belonged to, or at least were inclined in the direction of, the RILU, as in the Balkans. But in that case they were not members of the appropriate ITS. Alternatively, as in the case of the communist-influenced trade unions of Norway or Finland, they were members of an ITS, but they did not belong to the IFTU, because their national centres were independent of both internationals. In both cases, they were not sufficiently important to exert a decisive influence. The trade unions that belonged to the CGTU, in turn, were not insignificant, but they were regarded internationally as having split away from the ‘legitimate’ national centre, the CGT. Only trade unions belonging to the latter could claim

403 RGASPI 534/3/23/195.

404 RGASPI 534/3/23/238–41.

a place in the ITS for their industry. The conflict therefore came to centre on the relationship between the ITSS and the Russian trade unions and accordingly on the question of the Russian trade unions' membership in the RILU, an organisation which was in competition with Amsterdam.⁴⁰⁵

This became clear immediately after the founding congress of the RILU. In August 1921, a congress was held in Vienna to establish an International Federation of Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers, which was a combination of the Shoemakers, the Leather Workers and the Saddlers. This refused to admit the corresponding Russian trade unions, even though its core organisation, the Shoemakers, was on the left wing of the ITS, and its secretary, Josef Simon, had been an open opponent of the war after 1914 and was one of the leaders of the USPD. The Russian leather workers were represented by Iuzefovich, who asked for affiliation, but was only admitted as a guest with the right to speak both at the Shoemakers' congress, held on the eve of the unification congress, and at the unification congress itself.

The Shoemakers' congress was the scene of a clash between Simon and Iuzefovich, who accused the former of having ignored various letters sent by the Russian leather workers since 1920, including one which proposed an international congress in Moscow (see chapter 2, section 1). He also implied that the Russians had a different conception of the activities of an ITS when he criticised Simon for failing to exercise any political leadership. Simon rejected all these assertions, and he claimed that they had never received any letters from the Russians. The actual decision on membership, however, was postponed until the unification congress.⁴⁰⁶

The mood of the unification congress immediately turned edgy when Iuzefovich tried to intervene on a point of order, although as a guest he had no right to do this. The secretary of the Saddlers' Union, Sassenbach, called out: 'We shall not let ourselves be terrorised by the Russians'. Iuzefovich was free to speak in the course of the discussion, however, and he immediately made use of this opportunity at length in dealing with the first item on the agenda: the world economic crisis. His remarks about this were contradicted by Simon, but the real disagreement began over a different issue: the tasks of the new ITS. Simon

405 There is a survey of the attempts of the Russian trade unions to gain membership in the ITSS during this period in *Otchet VTsSPS 1921–1922*, pp. 5–11. The material preserved by the ITSS themselves is fuller, and in what follows we have relied mainly on this.

406 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des gemeinsamen Internationalen Kongresses (Vereinigungskongress) aller den Internaitonalen Sekretariaten der Schuhmacher, Lederarbeiter und Sattler angeschlossenen Organisationen. Abgehalten in Wien am 10. und 11. August 1921*, n.d., n.p., pp. 75–90.

introduced this point with a long speech describing the development of the situation since the end of the war, and he also spoke about the new political tasks of the trade-union movement, just as speakers at the IFTU congress had done. He then made a detailed examination of the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam' which in his view could only be answered in one way: the newly formed Trade Secretariat must align itself with the IFTU.

As was to be expected, Iuzefovich's argument consisted of a fierce attack on Amsterdam, in which he presented a whole catalogue of alleged misdeeds committed by that international, culminating in its participation in the International Labour Office. Fimmen, who was present as the representative of the IFTU, replied at length. He gave a detailed account of the boycotts undertaken in the previous year by the IFTU against intervention in the Russo-Polish war and against Hungary. When it came to the vote, there were six delegates (no further details than this are given in the minutes, unfortunately) who voted against the resolution which laid down the new ITS's support for the IFTU and at the same time rejected 'the Comintern's attempt' to split the movement (no one was yet aware of the independent existence of the RILU). With this, the Russian application for membership was automatically rejected.⁴⁰⁷

A month later, the congress of the International Secretariat of Printers took place. The Russian Printworkers' Union sent two representatives, Nikolai Gordon and Kusma Cherepov. Events did not unfold very differently here. They were admitted only as guests, and their right to speak was restricted to the question of the Russians' request to be admitted. Here too, the discussion turned around the question 'Moscow or Amsterdam'. The Russian Printworkers' Union's independence of the Russian government and the communist party was questioned by some speakers. This point was not just raised as a matter of principle. The fate of the Menshevik trade-union leaders also came up in the discussion. The Russian Printworkers' Union had been a Menshevik stronghold, which the communists were only able to take over after a hard fight, ultimately involving the arrest of the leaders of the Moscow Union of Printworkers. There was a discussion of their fate, about which only vague information was available. The Russian representatives at the congress were either unable or unwilling to give precise answers. The request for admission was rejected by 20 votes to two, and the matter was brought to a conclusion by the official statement that the Printers' Secretariat stood on the same basis as the IFTU,

407 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des gemeinsamen Internationalen Kongresses*, pp. 31–2, 43–8, and 52–60. See also K. Jusefowitsch, 'Die Ergebnisse des internationalen Kongresses der Lederarbeiter in Wien', *Die Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 7, October 1921, pp. 133–5.

and it could only be joined by organisations which also stood on that basis.⁴⁰⁸ In May 1922, the International Printers' Secretariat, which had acquired more precise information about the fate of the arrested Menshevik printworkers, approached the Russian Printworkers' Union about the subject. The Russians immediately replied by asking why they were so concerned about the Mensheviks' fate when they had neither accepted the Russian trade unions into their midst nor shown any interest in the expulsion of revolutionary minorities in Western Europe. The Russian letter also tried to show that the Mensheviks had only been arrested for their counter-revolutionary activities, and that they had been set free in the meantime. In any case, it added, the Mensheviks were entirely isolated.⁴⁰⁹

The results were similar at the congresses of a series of smaller Trade Secretariats, the Stoneworkers, the Furriers, the Hairdressers and the Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees, all held in August 1921. Here the Russians were not directly represented or they were not admitted to the congress at all, as in the case of the Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees. The issue was brought up instead by a few communist delegates from Western European unions, and they immediately raised the question of the choice between the IFTU and the RILU. In the case of the Stoneworkers, the Italian delegate left the congress after the vote had gone against him.⁴¹⁰

The situation was somewhat different with the International Federation of Textile Workers' Association. Their congress in September 1921 met without a Russian representative. The international secretary, Tom Shaw, had visited Russia in 1920⁴¹¹ as a member of the British Labour Delegation – along with another British textile workers' leader, Ben Turner – and he had made arrangements with the secretary of the Russian textile workers' union for them to join the textile workers' ITS. The Russians had received all the necessary material, but

408 *Protokoll des VIII. internationalen Buchdruckerkongresses in Wien vom 5. bis 9. September 1921*, Berne, 1922, pp. 9–10, 22 and 48–60.

409 *Internationales Buchdrucker-Sekretariat, Jahresbericht 1922*, pp. 9–11.

410 *Protokoll des Internationalen Steinarbeiter-Kongresses am 20.–22. August 1921 zu Innsbruck*, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 14–15; *Protokoll der Verhandlungen der sechsten Internationalen Kürschner-Konferenz. Abgehalten in München am 1., 2. und 3. August 1921*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 6 and 25–6; *Dritte Internationale Friseurgehilfen-Konferenz. Protokoll über die Verhandlungen am 9., 10. und 11. August 1921 zu Reichenberg*, Berlin, 1922, pp. 25–6; *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus 1922*, p. 89; and *Otchet VTsSPS 1921–1922*, pp. 8–9.

411 Afterwards he gave the International Committee of Textile Workers a very vivid description of his travel experiences (*Protokoll der Sitzung vom 14. 15. März 1921*, Berlin, 1921, pp. 26–32).

they had never replied, so that for him, as he explained in his report, there was nothing more to be done. In the course of the congress, however, a French trade unionist presented the mandate of the Russian union. It had been handed to him, he said, because no actual Russian representative had been able to come. This news was followed by a somewhat agitated discussion. The situation was complicated by the fact that formally speaking the Russians had been admitted the previous year, and they had even received an invitation to take part in the congress, but in the meantime they had not only failed to react but also not paid their membership fee. By doing this, it was argued by the majority of a committee set up by the congress to examine the matter that they had forfeited their membership rights and would have to apply once again for admission.⁴¹² In this way the congress managed to avoid any discussion of the issue of 'Moscow or Amsterdam', although some delegates had advised that they would raise it. Such a discussion might have led to the official expulsion of the Russians, which would doubtless not have made a good impression. In January 1922, at the International Committee of Textile Workers, Shaw noted again that the Russians had not replied to any letters. The committee thereupon decided to break off all relations. The Russian textile workers' union, however, declared that it had never received any letters.⁴¹³

All the ITSS mentioned above had therefore made their decisions earlier, in August and September 1921. There was nothing much left for the RILU and its member trade unions to do but direct their international activities entirely to setting up the Propaganda Committees. They were only weakly organised in these trades, in any case, and they had behind them no important Russian or Western European trade unions with international experience, so that for the moment all they could do was simply ignore the ITSS. It was different with the economically more significant Secretariats of the Metalworkers, the Transport Workers and the Building Workers. In these cases, the conflict between Moscow and Amsterdam continued to be virulent, and frequent conferences and special meetings were devoted to it.

In March 1921, the Central Committee of the IMF (International Metalworkers' Federation) had drawn a dividing line between itself and the Russians by rejecting the Russian claim for membership dating back to 1910, and by declaring simultaneous membership of both internationals to be impermissible (see chapter 3, section 9). The ninth congress of the IMF met in Lucerne in August

412 *x. Internationaler Textilarbeiter-Kongreß. Verhandlungsbericht, Paris, den 19. bis 24. September 1921*, London, 1921, pp. 5–6, 23–5, and 35–40.

413 'Die Konferenz der Textilarbeiter-Internationale in Reichenberg', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 1–2, January–February 1922.

1921 and was again confronted with the Russian question. As the IMF secretary Ilg declared when the congress opened, an invitation had not been sent to the Russian Metalworkers Union (VSRM) specifically because of the March decision. Some days before the congress began, he added, the Russians had announced that they would send a delegation, but he had not been able to get an entry visa for it at such short notice, since the Swiss Foreign Ministry had refused to issue one and it had not been possible to organise pressure on the government to go back on this decision.⁴¹⁴

The congress was unanimous in condemning this refusal to issue a visa. Towards the end of the session, however, there was a brief disagreement between Ilg and Merrheim, when the latter proposed a resolution in which in general terms the door to the international was held open to the Russian workers, specifying that this was an invitation to their 'real representatives', not to the 'communist dictators'. Ilg wanted to avoid any ambiguity, however, and he put forward a different resolution which simply confirmed the Central Committee's decision of March that it was impossible to be a member of both internationals simultaneously. His resolution passed by 26 votes to nine.⁴¹⁵

The absence of Russian delegates had no doubt spared the congress an open confrontation, which would have taken a similar course to the events at the other ITS congresses. This can be seen from the discussion between the Russian representatives, the leading KPD trade unionists and the MEB in Berlin a few days before the congress began. One of the Russians put forward the tactic the IPC had agreed on for the Lucerne meeting: take the offensive, confront the IMF with the question of its relationship with Amsterdam and demand that it recognise the revolutionary class struggle. They would in any case have the support of a strong minority of delegates. Rusch, who was to leave the party shortly afterwards over the Paul Levi affair, but received the support of most of the KPD trade unionists present at this meeting, warned against taking too favourable a view of the relationship of forces at the congress. It was unconditionally necessary, he said, to avoid a split, otherwise they would be standing there with support from no one but the syndicalists. The Russians replied that a split was not at present intended; it would only happen 'when the time is ripe'. Another KPD representative, however, threw in the comment that they must definitely strive for a Red Metal Workers' International.⁴¹⁶ All these con-

414 *Der IX. Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress am 8., 9., und 11. August 1921 im Volkshaus Luzern. Offizielles Protokoll*, Berne, 1921, pp. 21–3.

415 *Der IX. Internationale Metallarbeiter-Kongress 1921*, pp. 77–84.

416 GARF 5667/5/38/43–9.

siderations remained hypothetical though, since the Russian representatives had to return home without achieving anything, apart from the publication of a protest against their exclusion.⁴¹⁷

In the middle of October, the Central Committee of the VSRM announced that it had been excluded from the ITS. It appealed for a broad protest campaign to be conducted in Western Europe, but it also spoke of making preparations to call an international congress of metalworkers in Russia, to found a new international on a class struggle basis.⁴¹⁸ This flirtation with the idea of founding a counter-international found expression in the next few months in a series of proclamations, but no concrete steps were taken,⁴¹⁹ and it was soon replaced by a more realistic procedure. By March 1922, at the fifth congress of the VSRM, the Russians were only speaking in very general terms about the need to strengthen the IPC as the leading international organ of revolutionary metalworkers, without going into any more detail.⁴²⁰

This tactical reorientation was a reflection of the number of contacts the VSRM had established in the meantime with numerous metalworkers' trade unions outside Russia. They were in touch with the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in the United States for a short period, but more importantly they also got into contact with the Norwegian and Swedish metalworkers, who invited the Russians to their congresses in summer 1922.⁴²¹ For technical reasons the VSRM was unable to send any delegates to the congress of the Norwegian metalworkers. It sent a message, however, in which it explicitly warned the Norwegians against leaving the IMF. The Norwegian national centre's break with the IFTU had nothing at all to do with its relationship with the IMF, it was pointed out in the message.⁴²² The invitation from the Swedish metalworkers' union, which did belong to the IFTU, was accepted by the presidium of the VSRM, with the approval of the RILU,⁴²³ and two representatives were accordingly sent to its congress at the end of September in Stockholm.

417 Printed, for instance, in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, 30 August 1921, pp. 10–11.

418 'O mezhdunarodnoi rabote', *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov* vol. 1, part 1, 1927, pp. 444–5.

419 Golub and Shilovich 1978, pp. 21–2.

420 *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov* vol. 1, part 2, 1928, p. 30.

421 *Otchet TsK VSRM 6-mu s'ezdu metalistov*, Moscow, 1923, p. 276.

422 'Ein Schreiben des Zentralkomitees des Allrussischen Metallarbeiterverbands an den Norwegischen Metallarbeiterverband', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1922, pp. 381–2.

423 Golub and Shilovich 1978, p. 26 and RGASPI 534/3/23/1461.

The discussion within the IMF had not ceased in the meantime. At the beginning of January 1922, according to a report by Walcher in a letter to the IPC for metalworkers, Dißmann declared at the council of the DMV that the CC of the IMF had now reached agreement that the Russians could join the federation if they wished to. After all, other member organisations of the IMF also did not belong to the IFTU, or even in some cases were affiliated to the RILU. Some of the SPD members in the union's council objected strongly to this.⁴²⁴ Walcher either gave too optimistic an interpretation of Dißmann's remarks, or Dißmann himself had misjudged the situation. When the CC of the IMF met at the end of January, and the Norwegians raised the question of their continued membership, the majority of the CC, according to a newspaper report, was of the opinion that an exit of the Norwegian trade unions from the IFTU would inevitably affect their position in the IMF. Ilg, on the other hand, took a different view.⁴²⁵ On the 'Russian question' the CC did not alter its position, continuing to rule that the Russians could not be admitted to the IMF as long as they remained affiliated to the RILU.⁴²⁶ Even so, the IMF leadership apparently did not want to exclude the possibility that the purely confrontational relationship which existed with the Russian trade unions might be overcome. Dißmann was to play an important role in pioneering this change of tactics by the IMF.

At the end of September, there was a face-to-face meeting between the Russians and the IMF for the first time since 1920. At the congress of the Swedish metalworkers' union, roughly a third of the delegates were communists, and the Russians were able to play a big part in the proceedings. It is true that the actual leadership of the union was social democratic in tendency; but there was severe unemployment in this branch of industry and the trade-union leaders hoped that contact with the Russians would open possibilities for immigration into the country (this question had already been brought up on the occasion of Shliapnikov's visit to Stockholm in 1920). In return for this, the union was even prepared to put up with being described as 'semi-Bolshevik' in a sharp critique by the central press organ of Swedish social democracy. The Russian

424 This report was based on information provided to Walcher by a member of the KPD on the DMV council (RGASPI 534/5/43/32).

425 According to a report from a German representative to the IPC (GARF 5667/5/38/23-41).

426 'Tagung des Zentralkomitees des Internationalen Metallarbeiterbundes in Wien', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 1-2, January-February 1922. According to this report, Dißmann also adopted the same position. No minutes of the meeting have been preserved in the IMB Archive in the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

representatives at the congress, however, were forced to pour cold water on any hopes of this kind.⁴²⁷

Ilg met the two Russians outside the congress for an exchange of opinions. He insisted that the discussion should bear an unofficial character. It inevitably turned on the question of the Russians' membership in the IMF, which was impossible in Ilg's opinion as long as they continued to belong to the RILU. In such conditions, the only concrete result was an invitation to the VSRM to send a written explanation to the CC of the IMF as to the kind of relationship they hoped to have with that organisation. In view of the condition set by the IMF, it was clear to one of the Russian representatives that it was finally time to abandon the idea of trying to get into it, as he told the Executive Bureau of the RILU.⁴²⁸

The Central Committee of the IMF, however, after receiving a report from Ilg, declared when it met at the beginning of December that it was in principle prepared to have discussions with the Russians if they requested these. The sole condition for being accepted into the IMF was stated to be, as expected, the recognition of the federation's statute. One of its, however, was IMF membership of the IFTU. These and other provisions remained valid unless they were altered by a congress of the federation.⁴²⁹ The situation in regard to Russia's admission could therefore be described as blocked for the present. Soon, however, the obstacles were cleared away by two events: the Hague Peace Congress and the occupation of the Ruhr. In the spring of 1923, there was such a quickening of the pace of development in the direction of the united front that suddenly everything seemed possible.

In April 1921, the International Transport Workers' Federation had in practice drawn a line separating it from the Moscow trade-union international. There was, however, now an extra element to be considered: a Western European trade union which belonged to the International Transport Workers' Federation had joined the transport workers' IPC set up after the RILU congress. This union was the Dutch Federation of Transport Workers (the NFT). It was a

427 RGASPI 534/3/23/205-6 and *Otchet TsK VSRM* 1923, p. 276. See also Aleksander Loit, 'The Relations between the Swedish and the Soviet Trade Union Movements during the 1920s', in John Hiden and Aleksander Loit (eds.), *Contact or Isolation? Soviet-Western Relations in the Interwar Period. Symposium organized by the Centre for Baltic Studies, October 12-14, 1989*, University of Stockholm, Uppsala, 1991, pp. 293-308, here pp. 302-3.

428 RGASPI 534/3/23/205-6 and *Otchet TsK VSRM* 1923, p. 277.

429 *Berichte des Sekretärs und der Landesorganisationen 1921-1924 an den X. Internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongress in Wien*, Berne, 1924, p. 10, and FES IMB 2361, document 13. The IMF archive does not contain any minutes of this sitting.

part of the NAS, and the ITF had long been trying to achieve a merger between it at the transport workers' union of the NVV, which was described as the 'modern trade union movement' in the Netherlands, because strictly speaking only one organisation for each branch of industry and each country could be a member of the ITF. The ITF had made this decision at its April 1921 congress precisely in connection with the Netherlands.⁴³⁰ The delegates of the NFT had voted against this resolution. Since they were in the minority they should of course have complied with the resolution, but the NFT refused to take part in the unification talks scheduled by the ITF's Executive Committee. When the Executive Committee sat at the beginning of July, it expressed its sharp disapproval of this attitude. Fimmen was commissioned to make contact with the NFT leadership to bring about a reversal of its decision.⁴³¹

This did not happen. The most important leaders of the NFT were in Moscow at the time. After their return they published a number of articles on the RILU congress and the foundation of the International Propaganda Committees, which occasioned a fierce dispute about the NFT's relationship with the ITF at a session of the ITF General Council (the highest instance of the ITF between congresses), which was held between 3–5 October. The ITF leaders objected to the articles in question because they were attacked in them on political grounds, as being anti-revolutionary and reformist and an obstacle to the class struggle. The ITF also suspected that the transport workers' IPC was the starting-point of a red counter-international of transport workers. The NFT was represented at the General Council session by its chairman Bouwman (who was still a member of the ITF's Executive Committee) and one other person. They were as emphatic in defending their position as Williams and Fimmen had been in putting forward their criticisms. When they declared that there was no intention as yet to set up a counter-international, this also meant that the idea had not been ruled out. The General Council resolved to place its complaints before the federation's Executive Committee. If the verdict were in their favour it would be impossible for the NFT to continue as a member of the ITF.⁴³² Fimmen wrote in this sense to the NFT, and he received the same answer as before from Bouwman.⁴³³ The Executive Committee accordingly expelled

430 *Bericht über den internationalen Kongreß in Genf 1922*, pp. 79–80.

431 *Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation. Tätigkeitsbericht und Kassenbericht über das Jahr 1921*, Amsterdam, 1922, pp. 22–3, and MRC ITF 159/1/3/6.

432 The minutes of this session of the General Council are printed in the *ITF-Newsletter*, no. 5, 1 December 1921. See in particular pp. 4–14. See also 'Sie lügen wie gedruckt', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 51, 31 December 1921.

433 Printed in *Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation. Tätigkeitsbericht 1921 1922*, pp. 11–14.

the Dutch Federation of Transport Workers from the ITF at its sitting of 3–4 January 1922.⁴³⁴

There was more to come. At the same Executive Committee sitting, Fimmen revealed that the Finnish Transport Workers had withdrawn from the ITF because they too had decided to affiliate to the RILU. They had withdrawn voluntarily, as he later proved with documentary evidence in reply to a communist claim that they had been expelled.⁴³⁵ This is what would no doubt have happened anyway, if they had not pre-empted the decision. This is shown by the case of the Bulgarian Transport Workers' Union, which belonged to the communist-led trade-union federation in that country. The Bulgarian union was admitted at this same sitting of the Executive Committee, but the General Council hastened to reverse the decision at its April meeting when it learned that the Bulgarians belonged to the RILU.⁴³⁶ It was in line with this attitude that the ITF also refused to allow delegations from the Russian and Bulgarian seamen's unions and the *Schiffahrtsbund* to take part in the seamen's conference it held in Hamburg in January 1922.⁴³⁷

The trade unions affected by this either replied with a series of protests against their expulsion, as the Bulgarians did for example, or sent Open Letters to the ITF demanding their admission to the forthcoming ITF congress, as the Russians did.⁴³⁸ As was to be expected, there was little reaction to all this from the ITF. Its press organ only published a short comment on the subject. It replied to the Bulgarian protest by saying that it was open to them to appeal to the congress. But in any case their membership of the RILU was incompatible with membership of the ITF.⁴³⁹ There was therefore nothing left for the organisations which belonged to the transport workers' IPC to do but publish a vehement attack on the ITF's leaders when the congress took place, at the beginning of October. This memorandum from the RILU-affiliated

434 *Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation. Tätigkeitsbericht* 1921 1922, p. 15. On the expulsion of the Dutch Transport Workers as seen by the transport workers' IPC, see *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet* 1922, pp. 34–5.

435 *ITF-Newsletter*, no. 8, 15 January 1922, *ITF-Newsletter*, no. 20–22, 15 August 1922 and *Internationale Transportarbeiter-Föderation. Tätigkeitsbericht* 1921 1922, p. 10.

436 *ITF-Newsletter*, no. 8, 15 January 1922, *ITF-Newsletter*, no. 15, 1 May 1922, and *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet* 1922, p. 37.

437 B. Picelli, 'Internationale Seemannskonferenz', *Inprekorr*, no. 8, 19 January 1922, and *Rübner* 1994, p. 112.

438 G. Atschkanow, *Kurze Geschichte der Entwicklung der internationalen Bewegung der Transportarbeiter*, Berlin, 1928, pp. 16–18, and *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet* 1922, p. 36.

439 *ITF-Newsletter*, no. 20–22, 15 August 1922.

transport workers did, it is true, also contain an appeal for the formation of a genuine united front, and it denied the accusation that the IPC intended to set up an alternative international secretariat.⁴⁴⁰ Very soon, however, a very radical shift in the attitude of the transport workers would take place.

The 'Russian question' also repeatedly came to the surface in the International Federation of Building Trades, although this ITS had already decided against allowing Russian membership at the end of 1920 (see chapter 2, section 1). In August 1921, it organised a special conference in Innsbruck on the migration of building workers. A conflict broke out immediately, because a German communist, Otto Bachmann, appeared at the conference with a mandate from the Russian Building Workers' Union. Since the same Bachmann was also a member of the expelled opposition group in the German Building Workers' Union, the majority of the conference refused to allow him to take part. Only a genuine Russian representative, it was said, could be admitted, at least as a guest, as long as the Russian union did not belong to the Building Workers' International. A minority, led by the Italian delegate, was ready to admit Bachmann as a guest. After the vote, the Italian delegate left the conference in protest against the decision, although the question of migration affected the Italian building workers most of all.⁴⁴¹

This situation was repeated only a few months later, in the middle of December. This time a conference on the question of emigration was held in Bregenz. It was restricted in advance to delegates from countries which were affected by the problem, and this would in practice mean the non-participation of the Russians. This was perhaps the reason for the restriction. Nevertheless, two representatives of Russian trade unions presented themselves, and this time they were genuinely from Russia. This required a decision about whether they could be admitted. Not unexpectedly, their application was refused. On this occasion, the Italians did nothing, as it was very much in their interest that the conference proceeded in an orderly fashion, but now it was representatives from Switzerland and Czechoslovakia who withdrew in protest against the decision. This

440 Robert Williams brought the document to the attention of the delegates at the congress. Fimmen immediately pointed out that the Norwegian organisations which belonged to the ITF, and were alleged to have signed the document, had announced that they had in reality refused their signature (*Bericht über den Internationalen Transportarbeiterkongress in Wien, 2. bis 6. Oktober 1922*, Amsterdam, 1923, pp. 21–5. The text of the memorandum is printed in *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet 1922*, pp. 38–9).

441 'Außerordentliche Konferenz der Bauarbeiter-Internationale, abgehalten am 22. und 23. August 1921 im Arbeiterheim in Innsbruck', *Bauarbeiter-Internationale*, no. 6, October 1921, pp. 33–6.

in turn led to bad feeling among the Italians about the action of the Russians, since Switzerland was an important destination for migrating Italian building workers. They reacted by criticising the Executive Bureau of the RILU for inadequate preparation and clumsy tactics.⁴⁴²

The congress of the Building Workers' International met in Vienna at the beginning of October 1922. It had long discussions over the admission of the Russians. They were represented by two delegates. Since the representatives of major trade unions spoke both in favour of admission (Great Britain, Italy) and against it (Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands), it was decided to make a compromise (after the Russians had also made long speeches). While still insisting that it was impossible for an organisation which belonged to the RILU to be a member of the Building Workers' International, the conference declared that it was prepared to co-operate closely with the Russians and to exchange information and experiences. It resolved to send its secretary, Georg K  ppler, to Russia, to make contact with the appropriate people and to prepare a thorough report on the situation of the Russian building workers for the organisations that were members of the Building Workers' International.⁴⁴³ But he would not in fact make this journey until the spring of 1924.

Like the Building Workers' International, a number of ITSS with more limited international activities did not hold their congresses until 1922, or, in some cases, they did not hold a congress at all. But their weaker degree of international involvement was not particularly advantageous for the Russians in their attempts to gain admission. The reason was that in the meantime confrontation on an international scale had sharpened divisions. The second congress of the International Federation of Agricultural Workers in Vienna in the middle

442 RGASPI 534/3/23/7; 'Die Aus- und Einwanderung italienischer Bauarbeiter', *Bauarbeiter-Internationale*, no. 7, February 1922, pp. 1–6; 'Das Sekretariat der Bauarbeiter-Internationale gegen die internationale Solidarit  t', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 51, 31 December 1921; 'Internationale Bauarbeiter-Konferenz in Bregenz' and 'An die Bauarbeiter aller L  nder', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, January 1922, pp. 62–5; and 'Bauarbeiter-Internationale und Internationales Propaganda-Komitee der Bauarbeiter', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 1–2, January–February 1922. There was a strong communist element within the Swiss Union of Building Workers. It had sent a delegate to the founding congress of the RILU. One of the four secretaries of the union was a party member and he was one of those who left the Bregenz conference (August Vuattolo, *Geschichte des Schweizerischen Bau- und Holzarbeiterverbandes 1873–1953*, 3 vols., Z  rich, 1955, vol. 2, pp. 376–8 and 385–9).

443 RGASPI 534/3/23/209–10, and 'Entschlie  ung zur Frage der Aufnahme des Allrussischen bauarbeiterverbandes in die Bauarbeiter-Internationale', *Bauarbeiter-Internationale*, no. 11, March 1922, pp. 5–6.

of August 1922 not only rejected applications from the Russians and Bulgarians on the grounds of their membership of the RILU, but it also excluded the Czechoslovak Union of Agricultural Workers because it was involved in setting up the separate communist organisation in that country known as the International All-Trade Union Confederation (the MVS).⁴⁴⁴ In the case of the General Factory Workers' International, on the other hand, it appeared for a while as if the Russians might be admitted. O'Grady, who chaired the British Chemical Workers' Union and was also the chairman of the General Factory Workers' International, took part as a guest in the May 1922 congress of the Russian chemical workers, and declared that there were no further obstacles in the way of the admission of the Russians. But in November, the Executive Committee of the international refused the application on the grounds that the Russian union belonged to the RILU.⁴⁴⁵ The Russian Local Government Workers, for their part, could only discuss the question of their membership by sending a letter to the executive of the relevant ITS. They received a negative reply. The condition for admission, as usual, was that they withdrew from the RILU.⁴⁴⁶

In the case of the International Miners' Federation, the significance of the international organisation was inversely related to the economic importance and numerical strength of this branch of industry. The full-time secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain was also the part-time secretary of the International Miners' Federation, and apart from this the federation had practically no bureaucratic support.⁴⁴⁷ Its 26th Congress met in Frankfurt in August 1922. Before this, the Russian Miners' Union had repeatedly approached the miners' ITS without receiving any reply. It did not send a representative to the congress but only a letter, which was ignored, as was the request for admission to the ITS.⁴⁴⁸ Since the miners' movement was very divided internationally and the organisations which were under communist influence – for example, the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain in Germany – generally stood outside the International Miners' Federation, there was little pressure exerted by minorities in existing unions. This situation would change in 1924 when the MFGB came under new leadership.

444 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 93.

445 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 96.

446 Pankratov 1972, pp. 155–6.

447 See Herrmann 1994.

448 '26. Internationaler Bergarbeiter-Kongreß', *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter*, no. 31, 26 August 1922, and *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 80. It has not been possible to establish why no delegation was sent from the Russian Miners' Union, in spite of repeated invitations to do so by the Executive Bureau of the RILU (RGASPI 534/3/23/152–3).

The International Union of Woodworkers was also very weakly organised. At a conference held in 1919, a provisional executive had been elected, and in autumn 1921 this body was forced to fend off a Russian application for entry which had the support of the powerful Swiss Union of Woodworkers.⁴⁴⁹ Not until June 1922 was the IUW able to hold a congress, which took place in Vienna. Two Russian representatives arrived, the chairman of the Russian Union of Woodworkers, Urmansky, and Boris Izakov, who was able to use the resources of the Central European Bureau of the RILU to make special preparations for the congress. He organised, among other things, an international conference of revolutionary woodworkers and he was able to publish an information bulletin of the International Propaganda Committee of the revolutionary woodworkers from the beginning of April 1922 onwards. All these efforts took place against the backdrop of an exchange of letters between the Russian Union of Woodworkers and the IUW executive, which rejected the application for the usual reason, that the Russians were members of the RILU.⁴⁵⁰

After some hesitation – Izakov has given a colourful description of this⁴⁵¹ – the congress agreed to admit the uninvited Russian representatives as guests and to allow them to put forward their request for their union to be admitted. Not unexpectedly, both sides turned out to have incompatible points of view. The Swiss, however, again supported the Russians, and they skilfully made use of a comment by Fimmen. In his address to the congress on behalf of the IFTU, he had spoken emphatically in favour of ‘a real united front’ and affirmed his readiness to co-operate with ‘genuine Russian trade unionists’. The Russians also had significant support from the Italian delegates. Moreover, a British

449 See *Auf der Suche nach Solidarität. Eine Geschichte der internationalen Bau- und Holzarbeiterbewegung*, Cologne, 1993, p. 73. The Swiss Union of Woodworkers had already come into conflict with the leadership of the International Union of Woodworkers, which was then still under German leadership, during the First World War on account of its support for the war (see *Auf der Suche* 1993, pp. 53–6, and the relevant issues of the IUW bulletin). After the war, communist influence was stronger than it was in the building workers' union (with which the woodworkers would merge a month after the Vienna congress). Its secretary, Reichmann, had been a delegate at the founding congress of the RILU (Vuattolo 1955, vol. 1, p. 37). He now organised a campaign for the admission of the Russians, approaching the member organisations individually, and he gained the support of several of them. See the documents issued by the secretary of the IUW, ‘Kommunistische Konzentration in der Internationalen Union’, *Bulletin der IUW*, no. 1–2, March 1922, pp. 3–17.

450 Printed in *Die internationale Holzarbeiterbewegung und das IPK der revolutionären Holzarbeiter (Material zur Internationalen Konferenz der revolutionären Holzarbeiter)*, Berlin, 1922, pp. 24–6.

451 Izakov 1977, pp. 30–3.

member of the Executive Committee by the name of Alex Gossip, who would go on to co-operate closely and repeatedly with the communists in later years, without actually joining the party, spoke in favour of admitting the Russians, with the justification that it would be inconsistent not to do so, as the union had not cut itself off from the supporters of war after 1914. Despite all these arguments, the result of the vote was not in doubt. 59 delegates voted for, and 11 against, the Executive Committee's resolution that the Russians could only be admitted if they committed themselves to the IFTU.

It was consistent with this line that the application of the Bulgarian woodworkers, who belonged to the communist-run Bulgarian Federation of Trade Unions, was rejected on the grounds that a Bulgarian union already existed, oriented towards Amsterdam, although the Bulgarian applicants objected that their own union had already joined the IUW way back in 1910. Similarly, the newly formed CGT-affiliated French Union of Woodworkers was admitted to the IUW instead of the existing union which had affiliated to the CGTU. Tension progressively increased at the congress, and finally, at a big meeting held in the evening before the last day of the congress, there was a severe clash when the Russians were not allowed to speak, to which they responded by delivering their contributions in a stentorian bellow. There were also vehement protests by the congress majority about the way the congress was being reported in the Viennese communist newspaper *Die Rote Fahne*.⁴⁵² In later years, under the direction of Woudenberg (who was secretary from 1919–29) and Tarnow (secretary from 1929–33), the International Union of Woodworkers took a particularly emphatic line against any kind of co-operation with the Russians.

Not all the ITS leaderships had made up their minds in advance to oppose the admission of the Russians. The leaders of the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International (PTTI) were at first very conciliatory. The corresponding Russian trade union had announced its wish to join in May 1920 by telegram, and in November 1920, at the PTTI's congress, this was simply announced without commentary (see chapter 3, section 9). But the decision had no practical relevance at first, owing to the absence of any further contact. Not until

⁴⁵² *Internationale Union der Holzarbeiter. Ordentlicher Kongreß in Wien, 12. bis 15. Juni 1922*, n.d., n.p., pp. 11–14, 22–32, 38–76, 87–90 and 92–103, and 'Der Kongreß der Internationalen Holzarbeiter-Union' and 'Holzarbeiterversammlungen in Wien anlässlich des Kongresses', *Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 2, 1. August 1922. Some of the communist delegates (those from Switzerland, Norway and Czechoslovakia) were scolded afterwards by the Executive Bureau of the RILU because they had not acted decisively enough when the disagreement escalated into open hostility (RGASPI 534/3/23/146).

December 1921 did this take place, when a letter from the Russian trade union reached the secretariat of the PTTI. This was published, together with a report on the current condition of the trade union, and a statement of their position on international links, in which they made it plain that although they did not accept the connection with the IFTU laid down in the statutes of the PTTI, they did in any case want to establish international unity and they therefore wanted to affiliate to the postal workers' international.⁴⁵³

The secretariat responded by inviting a Russian representative to the next sitting of its Executive Committee held at the end of May and the beginning of June 1922 in Coblenz. Since the Russian representative could not enter the town, which was part of the French Zone of Occupation at the time, a meeting had to be held a week later at the international's Berlin headquarters between the Russian representative, the secretary of the PTTI, Dr. Ludwig Maier, and a number of other members of that organisation. The meeting of the Executive Committee, however, was very much influenced by reports of the split in France, and, as expected, this led it to confirm the membership of the CGT union of postal workers and not the CGTU union. When the Russian question was discussed, it was made clear that if the Russian postal workers remained in the RILU (through their membership of the VTsSPS) they could not join the PTTI. When the Russian representative announced that they would appeal to the next congress, Maier hastened to add that they attached very great value to their relations with the Russians, and that he hoped to achieve 'organisational connections' with them 'within a reasonable period of time'. At the end of the published report on the meeting, it was stressed that 'the comradely tone' of the proceedings 'had not been abandoned by any of the participants'.⁴⁵⁴

In the middle of August 1922, the PTTI congress met in Berlin, and it listened to a long communication in which the delegate of the Russian union justified his application to join. The Executive of the PTTI made its opposition clear,

453 'Ein Brief aus Rußland', *Internationale P.T.T.*, no. 2, January 1922, p. 101; N. Efreto, 'Die all-russische Gewerkschaft der Verkehrsarbeiter und Hilfsbediensteten', *Internationale P.T.T.*, no. 3, May 1922, pp. 117–27; and 'Unsere Korrespondenz mit den russischen Kameraden', *Internationale P.T.T.*, no. 3, May 1922, p. 143.

454 'Bericht über den Vollzugsausschuß und das Berliner Treffen', *Internationale P.T.T.*, no. 4, July 1922, pp. 170–77. Before the sitting of the PTTI Executive Committee, there was a difference of opinion between the Executive Bureau of the RILU and the Russian postal workers' union, because the latter was opposed to taking part in the meeting, saying that they should wait until the PTTI held its congress. The minutes do not indicate the reasons they gave for this (RGASPI 534/3/23/89–90).

but a number of supporters of the application also spoke. They based their arguments on the international character of the postal system. Since Russia had not been expelled from the World Postal Union, they would have to work together with its postal employees. The final result of the voting was 305,600 against and 223,800 in favour, so one can quite easily imagine that things might have gone differently. In any case, it was also agreed that the Executive Committee could continue to examine the question.⁴⁵⁵

The Russian postal workers' union naturally received this news with disappointment, and it made a public protest, adding that it would continue its endeavours. The majority was so narrow that the result might be different next time. It therefore turned to all the organisations that had voted against its admission, asking them why they had done so.⁴⁵⁶

There was, however, one big exception to this dismal picture, one case in which steps were actually taken to admit the Russians: the International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades (IUF). A meeting of the IUF executive held in May 1921, shortly before the RILU was founded, had already indicated its readiness to accept Russian membership (see chapter 3, section 9). The Russian food trade workers' union again emphasised its desire to join the IUF at a conference held in the middle of September 1921, provided it could remain in the RILU as well.⁴⁵⁷ Not until 6 March 1922, however, did the executive of the Russian union inform the IUF of its application to join. This delay can no doubt be ascribed to problems of international communication. The Russian union's application explicitly stressed its acceptance of the IUF's statutes (which, unlike many other ITS statutes, did not contain a clause about its relationship with the IFTU).⁴⁵⁸ At the end of March, the Executive Committee of the IUF confirmed that it had admitted the Russian union to membership.⁴⁵⁹

When the IUF Executive Committee met at the end of May 1922, it was attended for the first time by a Russian representative, Samuil Krol'. He was the

455 *Bericht über den 11. Internationalen Kongreß des Personals der Post-, Telegraphen- und Telephonbetriebe in Berlin. Gehalten vom 18. bis 21. August 1922*, Vienna, 1922, pp. 57–73.

456 'Die Russen und wir', *Internationale P. T. T.*, no. 6, February 1923, pp. 221–6.

457 'Congrès pan-russe des ouvriers de l'alimentation', *Bulletin mensuel de l'UIF*, no. 10, September 1921.

458 *Tätigkeitsbericht des Sekretariates der IUL und Berichte der angeschlossenen Organisationen an den 11. Internationalen Kongreß der Lebensmittelarbeiter in Kopenhagen*, Zürich, 1925, p. 23.

459 'Die russischen Nahrungsmittelarbeiter und die Internationale der Nahrungsmittelarbeiter', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 4, April 1922, p. 301.

chairman of the Russian food workers' union.⁴⁶⁰ It turned out that there was some opposition to the admission of the Russians. Some members, in particular the Dutch representative, said that the Russians should not have been admitted. He threatened that his organisation would leave the IUF if they remained. In any case it was clear, as the majority of the executive asserted, that according to the wording of the statutes Russia could only be admitted provisionally, until this was confirmed at the next congress, which was scheduled for 1923.

Krol' himself contributed to hardening the mood against the Russians by his speeches on a whole range of issues, in which he demonstrated the depth of the political chasm that divided the Russian trade unions from most of the Western European ones. His demand that they break off all relations with the International Labour Office was one example. Alongside these general perspectives, however, there were two specific problems which led to a confrontation.

One problem was connected with the French mandate, about which a dispute blew up right at the beginning of the session. A complex situation had arisen in this case, for the French food workers' union had been one of those in which the CSRs had already gained a majority before the split in the CGT. At its congress, which took place in July 1921, immediately before that of the CGT, the previous leadership, which supported the CGT Majority, was replaced by supporters of the revolutionary current. The IUF had reported this in its press organ, without making any comment.⁴⁶¹ After all, all these events had proceeded in a perfectly legitimate fashion. After the split in the CGT, what was now the minority (the previous majority group, in other words) left the food workers' trade union and set up a union of its own, which was recognised by the CGT and now demanded the French slot in the IUF. The majority of the IUF executive accepted this demand, justifying their decision, in the face of furious protests, with a very forced interpretation of the statutes. According to this, only trade unions that belonged to a national centre could be members of the IUF. But the CGT was the older national centre and had priority. It could be argued against this that the IUF was by no means a federation of different national centres, but a federation of organisations of a particular trade, and the French federation of food workers – which also belonged to a national centre, the CGTU – had long been an unquestioned member of it. Krol' was without doubt correct to accuse the majority of the executive of distorting the words of the statute so as to expel the French trade union. There was also a sequel

460 This paragraph follows the report printed as 'La séance du Comité directeur de l'Union Internationale. Procès verbal', *Bulletin d'Information de l'UIF*, no. 5, end of May 1922.

461 'Le xe Congrès Fédéral de la Fédération de l'Alimentation de France', *Bulletin mensuel de l'UIF*, no. 8–9, end of September 1921.

to this dispute, when Krol' criticised the behaviour of the executive at a public demonstration held during the session, and was rebuked for his action when it next met.⁴⁶²

The second cause for confrontation was the agenda item concerning the relationship between the IUF and the IFTU. The occasion for this was a discussion that had taken place during the IFTU congress held in Rome, which will be examined later. At this point, the IUF committed itself explicitly to the idea of a common approach by the IFTU and the ITSS, which had been accepted at the Rome congress. Krol' had asked to speak to this point of the agenda, but he was not given the opportunity to do so, for reasons of a formal nature. If he had spoken, there would no doubt have been another sharp conflict, and Krol' would certainly have pointed out that so far the IUF statutes had not contained a word about any link with the IFTU.

This meeting of the IUF executive was then brought up again four months later at the congress of the Russian food workers' union.⁴⁶³ Krol' reported at length, indicating the differences that had come to light. The union voted to join the IUF. But it also said that in view of what had happened, they must insist that the IUF break with Amsterdam and reorient itself towards the revolutionary class struggle. The Russian food workers' union must therefore co-operate in the International Propaganda Committee with all revolutionary food workers' unions, whether they were within the IUF or outside it, in order to establish the international unity of all food workers.

The IUF was represented at the congress of the Russian food workers by Josef Ormianer, a member of the IUF Executive Committee who, ironically enough, was himself a communist.⁴⁶⁴ He now felt himself obliged to criticise the sharp

462 See also the statement by the representative of the CGTU-affiliated food workers' union after this session, and the reply by a CGT trade unionist, printed in *Bulletin d'Information de l'UIF*, no. 6–7, end of July 1921.

463 'Rapport de la délégation au 4e Congrès de la Fédération pan-russe des ouvriers de l'alimentation, tenu dans la maison syndicale de Moscou, du 6 au 13 septembre', *Bulletin d'Information de l'UIF*, no. 8, September 1922.

464 He had been chosen for the IUF Executive in 1921 by its Swiss member organisation the VHTL (Union of Workers in Commerce, Transport and the Food Industry), after a member elected at the founding congress of the IUF in 1920 had resigned (*Tätigkeitsbericht IUL* 1925, p. 9). There was an active communist minority in the VHTL, which was particularly strong in Zürich, where the head office of the union was located. (On this, see the later account, written from an official VHTL point of view, by Josef Müller 1954, pp. 36–8 and 59–76). Ormianer was a member of the VHTL leadership and the IUF Executive until 1924. He found that he was continually required to seesaw between the needs of his trade union and the demands of the international association. His journey to Moscow had placed the

tone of the resolution, which was not conducive to international unity, which was after all what the RILU wanted as well. He proposed a compromise resolution, which contained no direct attacks on the IUF leadership and also avoided making any mention of the International Propaganda Committee. Not a single delegate supported him, however.

All this was grist to the mill of those who opposed the admission of the Russians. The general picture portrayed by Ormianer in his report and the particular situation of the food industry occasioned a strong attack on the Russians in the press organ of the IUF by the chairman of the Austrian food workers' union, which was rejected by Ormianer, but not just by him. The Russian food workers' executive also issued a corrective account.⁴⁶⁵ These disagreements showed that there were still some hurdles to be overcome before a final decision could be made.

The Russians were helped in their efforts by the fact that IUF activities were now very much concentrated on a single theme. This was the struggle to ban nighttime baking, which came to define the IUF's identity, and was to separate it to some extent from Amsterdam, since the IFTU at first found the proposal hard to swallow. The attitude of the Russians would also turn out to be not as unambiguous as they claimed, although officially there was complete unanimity in the IUF. This was demonstrated at the international bakers' conference called by the IUF in October 1922, at which a Russian representative was also present.⁴⁶⁶ It was reported there that the co-operatives – a part of the workers' movement, therefore! – were pressing for the removal of the prohibitions on night work enacted almost everywhere in the world during the First World War. In this they could count on a measure of agreement from some of the big national trade-union centres, above all the ADGB. The ADGB was sharply denounced at the conference, and the IFTU was also attacked for its absence. It had justified its refusal to come on the grounds that a Russian representative would be present, but this was also a convenient way of avoiding a discussion about its hesitant attitude towards the prohibition of nighttime baking. The Russian delegate then tried to bring up broader questions, by demanding that the ITF withdraw from the International Labour Office and calling on it to co-

IUF's finances under excessive strain, so its secretary asked the Russians, who had already paid their normal annual contribution, for an extra payment. This was made immediately (RGASPI 534/5/92/97–9).

465 See *IUL-Mitteilungsblatt*, no. 10, November 1922, no. 11–12, December 1922, no. 1, January 1923, and RGASPI 534/5/91/144.

466 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Weltkongresses der Bäckereiarbeiter am 14. und 15. Oktober in Köln am Rhein, Zürich, 1922.*

operate with the RILU, but without the sharp tone that had been used at the Vienna meeting. Whether the IUF would continue to accept the Russians was a question that would be decided by the course of events over the next year.

Seen as a whole, the attempts of the Russian trade unions to gain admission to the various ITSS were entirely unsuccessful. The main reason for this was undoubtedly the internal dynamic which operated within most of them. They reacted to the Russian challenge by forging a closer and more explicit connection with the IFTU. Although this was not just a result of the demands made from the outside, but also reflected the internal conflict the member organisations were involved in with their own communist elements, it demonstrated the depth of the differences between the Western European and Russian trade-union movements. The lines of division were not just of a general political nature. There were also pronounced cultural and socio-economic divergences involved. The Russian trade unions had in many respects failed to achieve advances which were by now a matter of course for the Western European trade-union movement. The Westerners ascribed the 'class struggle' character of Russian trade-union politics to the economic backwardness of the country.

The conflicts in the ITSS also led the IFTU itself to react when it realised what was happening. The regulation of the relationship between the IFTU and the ITSS had not just been placed on the agenda by the need that had arisen for a clear separation from the RILU. It was a quite fundamental structural problem for the international trade-union movement, since a second pillar of that movement, alongside the older branch of the International Trade Secretariats, had been established by the joining together of the national trade-union centres into an international organisation. There had already been a joint meeting of the IFTU and the ITSS to discuss their mutual relations shortly before the world war, at the Zürich congress of 1913, when the IFTU had emerged for the first time from the International Secretariat.

When the IFTU was re-founded in 1919, no guests from the ITSS were present at the meeting (though admittedly very few had yet reconstituted themselves anyway). At the end of November 1920, however, when the London congress took place, 18 secretariats were already represented,⁴⁶⁷ although they did not intervene in the discussion or even propose that relations between them should be regulated. The statutes adopted in 1919 also contained no provisions on this point. In view of the developments of previous years, however, the theme could no longer be avoided at the IFTU congress held in Rome at the end of April 1922.

467 *Bericht über den Ausserordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress 1921*, p. 7.

This time 23 ITSS were represented, with substantial delegations. On the third day, a resolution was passed, after a short discussion, which called for the establishment of 'unity of opinion and action' in the international trade-union movement. All national centres had to join the IFTU, and similarly all national organisations covering particular trades had to affiliate both to their own national centres and to the International Trade Secretariats. The bureau of the IFTU was empowered to conduct conferences with the ITSS.⁴⁶⁸

A discussion of this kind took place straight away, while the congress was in progress, at two evening meetings. Nothing was published about the course of the discussion, unlike on later occasions, and it has not proved possible to find any minutes made for internal use.⁴⁶⁹ A number of what were described as 'unanimous' decisions were, however, published. The ITSS were explicitly ranked as executive bodies of the IFTU and they thereby accepted the latter's leadership role. They were accordingly not entitled to voting rights at congresses. If an individual ITS had claimed to be autonomous in the past, this autonomy would be restricted in future. That these were not just abstract questions that might arise in the course of time was shown by the decision on a further point: the right to belong to an ITS. Although the concrete problem under consideration, namely the admission of the Russians, was not specified, it was determined that the member organisations of an ITS must be attached to the relevant IFTU-affiliated national centre. Two exceptions were specifically granted to this rule. One was that United States trade unions were allowed to be members, because although their national centre, the AFL, was not affiliated to the IFTU (it had announced its withdrawal in 1920), it had not conducted a campaign against the latter organisation. The other was that Russian trade unions which were not affiliated to the VTsSPS could join. Such unions did not exist, as everyone knew, and it was also hardly to be expected that any Russian trade union would respond by leaving the VTsSPS. Having made these decisions, the meeting of international secretaries then set up a committee to supervise their implementation, though that body did not go on to do anything of any significance.⁴⁷⁰

468 *Bericht über den internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress abgehalten in Rom 1923*, pp. 9–10 and 47.

469 The most detailed survey that could be found was 'Une réunion des secrétaires internationaux d'industrie', in *Le Mouvement syndical belge*, no. 11, 27 May 1922. There are shorter presentations in 'Der Internationale Gewerkschaftsbund und die Berufssekretariate', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 4, July–August 1922, pp. 204–5, and *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1922–1923*, pp. 36–7.

470 This committee met only once, on 27 March 1923, at a time when the political circum-

The decisions made in Rome were immediately applied by the ITSS. They were marshalled as additional arguments against Russian applications for admission, as we have seen above in the cases of the food workers' and woodworkers' unions. In reality, however, the dividing-line had already been drawn earlier. This was clear in the case of ITSS which made their decision before the Rome congress, at a time when the connection with the IFTU had not been formalised but was purely political and ideological. On the other hand, the IFTU now reacted to the solitary case in which a communist-led or at least communist-influenced ITS was emerging by intensifying its counter-action and setting up its own rival organisation. The case in question was that of the teachers, who set up a Pedagogic International in August 1922 (in 1924 it was renamed the Education Workers' International). Fimmen, on behalf of the IFTU, announced various initiatives in this direction at the Rome congress and then in a leading article in the IFTU's organ, without actually mentioning the existence of the Pedagogic International.⁴⁷¹ Fimmen's efforts finally, at the end of December 1922, led to a meeting during the Hague Peace Congress which consisted merely of a small number of social-democratic teachers' groups. The creation of a teachers' ITS associated with Amsterdam turned out to be impracticable in the short term, despite a series of meetings in subsequent years. As long as both social-democratic and communist-led teachers' trade unions were united in the Pedagogic International, Amsterdam's attempts to organise a rival group were doomed to failure.⁴⁷²

In fact the existence of two different ways of organising the international trade-union movement raised two separate issues which were not necessarily connected with each other: the fundamental structural question of the relationship between these two supporting pillars of the international trade-union movement, and the problem which had arisen for political reasons of the Russian and other trade unions belonging to the RILU. These two issues, however, would continue to be bound up together in the discussions of the next few years, since both of them concerned the place of the ITSS in the system of international trade unionism, in other words the amount of organisational and political autonomy they could be granted.⁴⁷³

stances surrounding this question had already begun to change. (See *Tätigkeitsbericht des IGB 1922–1923 1924*, p. 37).

471 *Bericht IGB-Kongreß 1922*, p. 25, and 'Eine Internationale der Lehrer', *Internationale Gewerkschaftsbund*, no. 3, May–June 1922, pp. 144–8.

472 See Schnorrbach 1989, pp. 21–4 and Stöhr 1978, pp. 484–7.

473 This problem, which was also very important for the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) between 1945 and 1949, has hardly been studied as yet in regard to the IFTU. The

For the RILU, the hoped-for conquest of the International Trade Secretariats had ended in failure, at least for the moment. The first RILU congress had already suggested a response by talking vaguely about the possibility of establishing revolutionary Trade Secretariats, subject to very strict conditions.⁴⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the Central Council session held in February and March 1922, hence after a series of ITS congresses from which the Russians had been excluded, maintained that it was necessary to keep fighting within them for influence. Only when everything else had failed could preparations be made for a new International Trade Secretariat. The Central Council did not, however, give any more precise indication of when this 'eventuality' might actually occur.⁴⁷⁵

Then came the news of the decisions of the Rome congress⁴⁷⁶ involving the continued exclusion of the Russians, and the measures taken towards the French trade unions after the split in the CGT. Now the feeling that red International Trade Secretariats should be set up became stronger. The Russian trade unions were not in the forefront in this regard, however. It was above all the trade unions attached to the CGTU which now raised the question of independent organisation, by approaching the Russian trade unions with proposals for this.⁴⁷⁷ Since their place had already been taken by the CGT-affiliated trade unions, and they were regarded as 'splitters', they had no chance of being accepted into their ITSS.

Now the feeling that separate ITSS should be set up began to spread in the Russian trade unions as well, since the existing ITSS had turned out to

issues are sketched out in Geert van Goethem, 'The ITF and the struggle between the professional and interprofessional structures within the International Federation of Trade Unions 1919–1949' in Reinalda (ed.) 1997, pp. 106–16. But he does not take account of this early discussion of 1922 about the admission of the Russians into the ITSS. The post-1945 quarrels in the WFTU, in which the question of organisational autonomy was intertwined with the political conflict between social democrats and communists during the approach of the Cold War, have been examined most recently in Werner Reutter, 'Internationale Gewerkschaftsorganisationen zwischen Einheit und Spaltung. Die Internationale Vereinigung der Textilarbeiter und der Weltgewerkschaftsbund 1945 bis 1949', *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 2, June 1995, pp. 168–86. Once again, though, the problem is presented here as if it had never come up before.

474 See its 'Resolution über die Organisationsfrage', in *Resolutionen, Statuten* 1921, pp. 50–66, here pp. 59–61.

475 'Resolution zu dem Bericht über die Internationalen Propaganda-Komitees', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 234–5.

476 See the remarks in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 63.

477 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 63 and 91–2, and Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 52–3.

be very obstinate towards them. The changed mood was apparent at several meetings of trade union Central Committees and IPC secretaries.⁴⁷⁸ Lozovsky articulated it publicly at two meetings prior to the second RILU congress, which would have to make the final decision. The fifth Russian trade-union congress listened to a wide-ranging report by Lozovsky on the movement's international tasks. He presented a broad panorama of the international trade-union movement, describing the activities of the RILU and in particular of the Russian trade unions against this background. He also went into detail about the behaviour of the ITSS, declaring that after all the experiences the Russians had had, they had come to the conclusion that the next RILU congress should pose the question of setting up red International Trade Secretariats.⁴⁷⁹ There was no discussion of this point at the congress, nor was there talk of any other item of Lozovsky's report. Krol' alone made a contribution, with the declaration that while he agreed with Lozovsky's theses, this did not change the attitude of his trade union to membership in the IUF.⁴⁸⁰ Lozovsky's theses were adopted unanimously by the congress. They confirmed the new orientation that the International Propaganda Committees were now expected to take. The IPCs were, however, also to remain active in cases where a Russian trade union might still be able to enter an existing ITS.⁴⁸¹ Only a few days after the conclusion of the congress of Russian trade unions, Lozovsky presented a plan for the organisation of the new ITSS to the VTsSPS. According to this, there were certain branches – transport, woodworking, building, and leather-working – where the basis for a red International Trade Secretariat was already available. The existing ITSS should be set a six-month deadline for the admission of all revolutionary trade unions. If this did not happen, they should set to work to establish the new international organisations.⁴⁸²

An article by Nin, using similar arguments, showed that Lozovsky was not alone in thinking this way, but rather gave expression to a widely held view among the RILU leadership. If the reformists continued their splitting activities, he said, the revolutionary trade unionists would be forced, against their wishes, to found new International Trade Secretariats. He also added, quoting Lozovsky, that they did not intend a split, but they were also not scared

478 Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 53.

479 *Stenograficheskii otchet piatogo vserossiiskogo s'ezda professional'nykh soiuзов 17–22 sentiabria 1922 g.*, Moscow, 1922, pp. 260–76, here pp. 265–6.

480 *Stenograficheskii otchet piatogo vserossiiskogo s'ezda 1922*, p. 276.

481 *Stenograficheskii otchet piatogo vserossiiskogo s'ezda 1922*, pp. 541–3.

482 RGASPI 534/3/33/6–7.

of one.⁴⁸³ It was ironic that the IFTU found a confirmation of its own attitude in such declarations. The Russians' openly declared intentions, it was claimed by the IFTU, made it clear that their applications for admission to the ITSS were mere pretexts. They wanted to join them in order to destroy them.⁴⁸⁴

In the months that followed, Lozovsky put his new line forward on many occasions. He was, however, cautious in his formulations and he did not choose to repeat the organisational conclusions he had drawn in his internal memorandum. This is true of the report he gave on behalf of the Executive Bureau to the second RILU congress⁴⁸⁵ and his introductory speech of 20 November to the Fourth Comintern Congress on the agenda item 'Tasks of the Communists in the Trade Unions', which was given immediately before the beginning of the discussions at the RILU congress. He explicitly stated to the Fourth Congress that the 'organisation of new international federations' was 'an immediate question'.⁴⁸⁶ There was some discussion of this item, but the question of the ITSS was only raised by the Italian Tasca, who asked for clarification, which Lozovsky provided in his concluding speech.⁴⁸⁷ The final trade-union resolution at the Fourth Comintern Congress only referred in general terms to the exclusion of communist unions from the ITSS and limited itself to stressing the need to support the IPCs, without indicating any organisational implications of this.⁴⁸⁸ The reason for the change was that in the meantime it had been decided at the RILU congress to adopt a different way of proceeding.

The Russians had initially hoped that they would be admitted to the ITSS; then they were rejected. There was uncertainty as to the conclusions to be drawn from this, and this uncertainty formed the background to the activities of the 15 International Propaganda Committees; they were torn between organisational and propagandistic activity. Fourteen committees had been set up after the founding congress of the RILU, while a fifteenth – the leather-workers'

483 Andrés Nin, 'L'I. S. R. et les Fédérations Internationales', *La lutte de classes*, no. 9, 5 September 1922.

484 *Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 276, 15 December 1922. The article referred in particular to the declaration of the congress of the Russian food workers' union, mentioned earlier.

485 *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, p. 64.

486 *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses* 1922, pp. 449–79, here 474 [English: *Toward the United Front*, 2012, pp. 529–61, here p. 556].

487 *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses* 1922, pp. 506 and 540 [English: *Toward the United Front* 2012, pp. 592–3 and 627–8].

488 'Richtlinien für die kommunistische Aktion in den Gewerkschaften', *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses* 1922, pp. 1053–60, here p. 1059 [English: 'Theses on Communist Activity in the Trade Unions', *Toward the United Front* 2012, pp. 1199–206, here p. 1205].

committee – was first formed directly after the congress of the International Federation of Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers in August 1921 in Vienna by the representatives of revolutionary trade unions who were present there.⁴⁸⁹

The development of these IPCs now became the central activity of the Executive Bureau. At the beginning of September, it sent a special appeal to the RILU's member organisations asking them to give the fullest support to them.⁴⁹⁰ A special department within the Executive Bureau's apparatus was set up to direct the IPCs, and the Executive Bureau itself not only dealt with the affairs of the IPCs at many of its sittings, but also regularly met with their secretaries.⁴⁹¹

There were numerous organisational problems the Executive Bureau had to address, caused above all by the fact that the secretariats of the IPCs were predominantly based in Moscow. The Russian trade unions, after all, formed the organisational and financial basis of the propaganda committees, since the Executive Bureau was not in a position to finance them. They did have members in Western countries, and representatives to the different trade-union movements outside Russia were assigned. But these people were often too busy with other activities to be able to devote sufficient attention to the IPCs. There were also losses through imprisonment and withdrawal from the organisation. The Russian trade unions therefore had to set aside, and then to train, an extensive reserve of cadres. The IPCs were therefore only able to issue Russian-language publications. For publications in Western languages, they were dependent on propaganda apparatuses that already existed. Only in the course of 1922 was it possible in Germany to issue modest quantities of duplicated bulletins from the IPCs of woodworkers, transport workers and miners.⁴⁹²

The second session of the Central Council was devoted extensively to the problems of the IPCs, but all it could do was recommend them to create a stronger 'infrastructure' in individual countries by setting up local propa-

489 Pankratov 1972, pp. 147–9.

490 'Zirkular über die internationalen Propagandakomitees', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 2, 12 September 1921, pp. 44–6.

491 'Konferenzen der Sekretäre', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 9, 17 December 1921. The minutes of these meetings are in RGASPI 534/3/19 and 38.

492 This short sketch of the problem follows the survey in *Bericht des Vollzugsbureaus* 1922, pp. 65–97, which gives details pertaining to individual IPCs. See also *Otchet VTsSPS 1921–1922*, pp. 11–15, Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 30–60 and Pankratov 1972, pp. 164–70. Details of the IPC publications are given in Goldbeck 1987, pp. 81 and 97.

ganda committees and drawing intensively on the resources of trade unions or revolutionary minorities within them. They should develop concrete action programmes which addressed the problems of the particular trade they were targeting. Where possible, they should consider trying to get the seat of the relevant ITS transferred elsewhere.⁴⁹³

Few of the IPCs had won such a broad base of support that they could organise conferences between the congresses of the RILU, unless they were simply discussions pursued on the periphery of ITS congresses. Two that could were the woodworkers' IPC, which had a direct representative in Berlin in the person of Izakov, who was a member of the MEB,⁴⁹⁴ and the miners, who thanks to the base of support provided by the UdHuK, were able to hold a conference in Essen between 25–27 September 1922.⁴⁹⁵

It was, however, the transport workers' IPC in particular which proved to be the most powerful propaganda committee. At the beginning of August 1922, it held a second conference in Hamburg, which included the Russian transport workers' trade unions, minorities from some Amsterdam organisations, the CGTU railway workers' union, the NAS transport workers' union, and the *Schiffahrtsbund*. Some individuals – such as Walter, who represented the *Schiffahrtsbund* – called for the meeting to move towards establishing a red transport workers' international. But many speakers opposed this idea with the argument that a question of such fundamental significance could only be decided by the next RILU congress.⁴⁹⁶

The Hamburg conference had already been preceded by a conference of transport workers from the East which met in Moscow on 2 and 3 March and had been called by the IPC after the Congress of Toilers of the Far East had taken place. Railway workers from Indonesia and seamen and transport workers from

493 'Resolution zu dem Bericht über die Internationalen Propaganda-Komitees', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 3, March 1922, pp. 234–5.

494 See above, and also Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 47–8.

495 Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 54–6.

496 The minutes are in RGASPI 534/5/33–69, while there is a highly truncated summary, omitting the speeches of the advocates of a new international, in *Mitteilungsblatt des Internationalen Propagandakomitees der revolutionären Transportarbeiter*, no. 1, 1 September 1922. There is another account in *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet propagandy 1921–1922* 1922, pp. 47–52. Sépard, the delegate of the CGTU railway workers, immediately repeated in print the position he stated at the conference, that the decision on the formation of a red transport workers' international would need to be taken by the second RILU congress (Pierre Sépard, 'Une Conférence Internationale des Transports', *La Vie ouvrière*, no. 171, 18 August 1922).

Japan, China and India were represented at it.⁴⁹⁷ The transport workers' IPC also had a special role because it possessed its own organisation, namely the port bureaux set up for work among seamen. It now proceeded to extend these systematically. These port bureaux were centres where seamen could gather together, and they provided a social environment which competed with the Christian seamen's clubs and could also be used to disguise the work of establishing a network of illegal communications. They became the ideal instrument for agitating among seamen, and recruiting and organising maritime communist cadres. There were port bureaux in the second half of 1922 in the big Russian harbours, but also in Western Europe. They were most strongly implanted in Hamburg, but they also existed in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Le Havre, Marseilles, London, New York and elsewhere.⁴⁹⁸

In view of the uncertainties created by the tension between the Russians' desire to be admitted to the existing ITSS and the plans for the foundation of new red ITSS, the IPCs continued to balance between organising and propagandist activity. Few of them succeeded in developing any continuity of action, and some had even gone into hibernation in practice, as the discussions following the second RILU congress would demonstrate (see the next section).⁴⁹⁹ The clear organisational weakness of the IPCs contrasted starkly with the intensity with which the demand for international leadership of the class struggle in the economic struggles of the different branches of industry was brought forward by the RILU, not least as a critique of the 'reformist incompetence' of the ITSS.

5 The Second Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions

The Executive Bureau made thorough preparations for the second congress. It set the main direction the congress would follow well in advance. As mentioned earlier, Lozovsky gave a general survey of the position when he spoke at the fifth congress of Russian trade unions, between 17–22 September 1922. First he gave his hearers a guided tour of the whole international trade-union movement. The offensive of capital had led to a retreat by the organised working class, he asserted. The influence of the revolutionaries had nevertheless increased,

497 *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet propagandy 1921–1922* 1922, pp. 31–3.

498 *Otchet VTsSPS 1921–1922* 1922, p. 13 and 'Portovye biuro i Mezhdunarodnye kluby moriakov' in *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet propagandy 1921–1922* 1922, pp. 41–6.

499 In his report to the RILU congress, Lozovsky said that the following IPCs had continuous activity to their credit: mining, metalworking, transport, leather-working, building and woodworking (*11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 34).

despite the wave of splits and expulsions which was Amsterdam's reaction. But at the same time, a new opponent of the revolutionary movement had emerged in the shape of 'anarcho-reformism', a trend among the syndicalists which called for separation from the RILU under the slogan of the independence of the trade unions. In view of the class struggles that were on the horizon, however, the RILU could increase its influence further by grouping together communists, syndicalists and independent class-struggle oriented trade unions.

The theses presented by Lozovsky were adopted without discussion. This meant that the major guidelines for the RILU congress had now been set. Two items in particular had consequences in terms of tactics and organisation. One point was that the way had been opened to the formation of red International Trade Secretariats, under certain conditions. The theses also took up a position on the conflict with the CGTU over the 'organic link' between the RILU and the Comintern adopted by the founding congress. Without directly calling for a change in the statutes, the theses indicated a certain readiness to compromise, by calling for a settlement of the dispute in a way that would make it possible for the adherents of both positions to cooperate in a single international. This congress of the Russian trade unions also elected a large delegation to the RILU congress (consisting of 45 people, who would together have at their disposal the 17 votes to which the Russian delegation was entitled) and this delegation now also represented the non-Russian republics, whose separate representation had been the cause of so much bad blood at the founding congress.⁵⁰⁰

A few days later, Lozovsky sent a letter in the name of the Executive Bureau to the VTsSPS in which he gave a detailed account of the way the congress was planned to proceed, stressing in particular the two items we have just mentioned.⁵⁰¹ At a meeting held a few days before the RILU congress began, the bureau of the Bolshevik fraction in the VTsSPS once again explicitly stated that it would not take a rigid attitude towards the syndicalists' demand for a change in the statutes. The fraction bureau decided that it would also be the bureau for the Russian delegation to the congress, and adopted a list of candidates for the presidium of the congress.⁵⁰² But the last and most decisive preliminary discussion of the communist position on the statutes took place immediately before the RILU began its working sessions on 21 November (it had its first sitting on 19 November, but this was merely a ceremonial occasion). This was the trade-union discussion at the Fourth Comintern Congress.

⁵⁰⁰ *Piatyi s'ezd VTsSPS* 1922, pp. 260–76, 283 and 541–3.

⁵⁰¹ RGASPI 534/3/33/1–8.

⁵⁰² RGASPI 95/1/27/200.

Here Lozovsky again presented the main report. This time the picture he painted of the international trade-union movement was still broader in scope. The accent here lay above all on the appeal to the communist parties to carry out more intensive fractional work in the trade unions. In this context, Lozovsky criticised the French party, because it had taken such a long time to make up its mind to do this. That delay had worked in favour of the anarcho-syndicalists. There was a special problem in the English-speaking countries, because there communist parties were very weak but the trade unions were very large. This required that the opposition in the trade unions be organised in a special manner. Lozovsky referred back once again to the Levi-Friesland crisis and the demands that had been put forward in the KPD as a result for the liquidation of the RILU. The KPD had also failed to create communist cells in the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain. This had temporarily alienated the Union from the party, and subsequently the party had fallen into the opposite error towards the Union. We do not want to split the trade unions, he said. But if organisations like the UdHuK are in existence, we have to forge close ties with them. In any case, we should preserve the RILU under all circumstances. The parties must strengthen it, because its dissolution would narrow the communists' sphere of action and undeniably lead to the liquidation of the Comintern.⁵⁰³

This time a livelier discussion developed, in which the participants were concerned above all to give greater precision to the way Lozovsky had described the situation in their particular country. Serious disagreements only arose between the French delegates themselves. They accused each other of being responsible for the malaise in the CGTU which was expressed in the emergence of the syndicalist push for independence. Representatives of the syndicalist current in the CGTU did not take part in the Comintern congress (they had only come for the RILU congress) with the result that the change in the statutes they demanded did not play any role in the discussion. An American delegate, who was associated with the United Labor Council of independent trade unions, put forward the views of the ultra-leftists, who opposed the idea of creating a legal party and working within the AFL. But he was fighting a losing battle. It had in the meantime become the common opinion of the whole of the international communist movement that they should not engage in any kind of agitation for withdrawal from the trade unions.⁵⁰⁴

503 *Protokoll des vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1923, pp. 449–79 [English: *Toward the United Front* 2012, pp. 529–61].

504 For the debate, see *Protokoll des vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1923, pp. 479–526 [English: *Toward the United Front* 2012, pp. 561–613].

In his speech concluding the debate, Lozovsky responded in detail to everyone who had spoken, but he did not add anything new.⁵⁰⁵ The 'Theses on Communist Activity in the Trade Unions' adopted by the congress once again outlined the Comintern's position on the struggle with Amsterdam and anarchism, criticised the 'theory of neutrality' and laid down conditions for co-operation with the syndicalists. There was a special section on the fight against the expulsion of communists from trade unions. The directives concluded by stating that communists were committed to working within the trade unions – in order to conquer them – but that they were committed at the same time to striving for their affiliation to the RILU. There was nothing in these directives, however, on the concrete questions facing the RILU congress. The RILU thus retained the right to make its own decisions. What the Comintern had done was to lay down very general principles, which were aimed at strengthening the RILU as an organisation while at the same time binding it more closely to the communist movement as a whole.⁵⁰⁶

The second RILU congress⁵⁰⁷ was solemnly opened by Lozovsky on 19 November 1922. In his introductory speech, he once again stressed the RILU's

505 *Protokoll des vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1923, pp. 533–41 [English: *Toward the United Front* 2012, pp. 621–30].

506 *Protokoll des vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* 1923, pp. 1053–60 [English versions: Degras 1956, pp. 410–16 and *Toward the United Front* 2012, pp. 1199–206].

507 There is only fragmentary material available in the RILU archive on this congress (RGASPI 534/1/15–27). We have therefore fallen back on the printed minutes of the congress. It was only possible to discover the Russian edition of these minutes: *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov v Moskve. 19. noiabria–2 dekabria 1922 goda*, Moscow-Petrograd, 1923. Not all the contributions were printed in full; the speeches in languages other than Russian are sometimes simply summarised, in versions which are clearly based on the translations made at the time. Even so, this edition is much fuller than the collection of congress bulletins which was also published as a book after the congress ended, under a somewhat imprecise title. In these bulletins, the Russian-language contributions are also simply summarised: *Biulleten' II. kongressa Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov v Moskve v Kolonnom zale I-go Doma Soiuzov 19-go noiabria 1922 goda*, Moscow 1922. In German there only appeared summaries of the speeches. These were published in the contemporary communist press: in a special issue of *Inprekorr* (no. 7, 10 January 1923) and two articles in *Der Kommunistische Gewerkschafter* (no. 1, 6 January 1923 and no. 2, 20 January 1923). The following speeches and materials were also published under various titles: *Die Einheitsfront, die Spaltungstätigkeit der Amsterdamer und die Offensive des Kapitals. Stenogramme der Reden der Genossen Heckert und Pavlik auf dem 2. Kongreß der RGI*, Berlin, 1923; *Die Organisationsfrage auf dem 2. Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Stenogramm der Reden der Genossen Losowsky und Hais*, Berlin, 1923; *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale. Die Frage der wechselseitigen Beziehungen zwi-*

special nature as an organisation. His remarks were followed by the election of the presidium, and a number of speeches greeting the assembly, by Dudilieux (CGTU), Geschke (Germany), Garden (Australia), Pavlik (CSRS), Tasca (Italy), a representative of the seamen of China, Clara Zetkin (for the Comintern), who also read out a telegram from Zinoviev, and finally Andreev (for the VTsSPS).⁵⁰⁸

The agenda of the congress was only decided at its second sitting, on 21 November. It was as follows: Report of the Executive Bureau (Lozovsky); The Offensive of Capital, Amsterdam's Splitting Activities and the United Front (Heckert); Questions of Organisation (Lozovsky and Hais); the RILU and the Comintern (Nin, Tresso and Monmousseau); Unemployment (Hardy); The Fight against Imperialism and Militarism (Semard), The Russian Trade Unions and the New Economic Policy (Andreev); Trade Unions in the Countries of the East (Heller and Garden); Trade Unions and Cooperatives (Antselovich); and Elections.⁵⁰⁹

In the report of the Executive Bureau, Lozovsky gave a broad survey of its activities.⁵¹⁰ After the founding congress, the most urgent task had proved to be the construction of an apparatus, 'not only in Russia, but particularly abroad'. It was urgent to establish a foreign apparatus because the representatives of the RILU always met with obstacles on their foreign trips. He stressed the importance of the Central European Bureau in this connection, because it ensured communications with the whole of Europe. He also mentioned the British Bureau by name. He did not give any details of the apparatus, however.

Moving on to the work of the Executive Bureau itself, he only gave a quantitative survey of the themes this covered. He did not raise the problem of the continual changes in its composition and the consequences that flowed from this instability. In fact he did not mention the point at all, although very few of the people elected to the Executive Bureau had remained members of it.

schen der RGI und der KI auf dem 2. Kongreß der RGI. Stenogramme der Reden der Genossen Nin, Monmousseau, Tresso und Sinowjew, Berlin, 1923; Leo Heller, *Gewerkschaftliche Bewegung in den Kolonien und Halbkolonien des Ostens. Rede, gehalten auf dem zweiten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, Berlin, 1923; and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen des 2. Internationalen Kongresses der revolutionären Gewerkschaften vom 19. November bis 2. Dezember 1922*, Berlin, 1923. The course of the congress has been described in the studies by Resis (1964, pp. 281–332) and Karpachev (1976, pp. 158–68).

508 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 9–19. The Chinese seamen's union had led a significant strike in southern China at the beginning of 1922. The identity of its representative at the second RILU congress has not been established up to the present. There was also another Chinese delegate, a railwayman (Kartunova 1972, p. 49).

509 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 20.

510 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 20–35.

Replacements were co-opted onto the bureau. The RILU had at least given itself a considerable 'public face' with its press organs. It had both its official journal and organs for particular countries, while in the months preceding the second congress the International Propaganda Committees had started to issue information bulletins.

In any case, having looked at the number of adherents of the RILU, Lozovsky considered that it already amounted to approximately 15 million (this was reduced in the course of the congress by the mandates commission to 12 million).⁵¹¹ This was, he said, exactly as many as the IFTU claimed to have. The difference was that a third of their members sympathised with the RILU, whereas the RILU contained no one who supported Amsterdam. The fact that there were large member organisations of the RILU all over the world demonstrated that it alone was a genuine international.

Lozovsky also surveyed the RILU's attitude towards the 'offensive of capital' and the united front policy developed to combat this. This had initially faced criticism from some of the syndicalists, and thus had been opposed within the ranks of the RILU itself. The same thing applied to its relationship with the Comintern. In this connection, he endeavoured to present the impression that there were two internationals, enjoying equal rights, by enumerating all the problems that had been discussed jointly by both leaderships. It was in any case necessary to speak to the Comintern because the RILU could not, after all, give instructions to the communist trade-union fractions. He did not, however, say a single word about how the system of reciprocal representation in both leaderships had functioned, although this was the real stumbling block for the syndicalists. In order to do this, he would have had to examine the composition of the Executive Bureau itself. The formation of a syndicalist bureau at the Berlin conference of June 1922 had been, in his view, merely a sign of sectarianism, since the real revolutionary forces among the syndicalists had joined the RILU in the meantime, or at least, as at Saint-Étienne, they had indicated conditions for joining which were not out of the question.

He ended his report by reviewing the problems of various specific countries, and by summarising the Executive Bureau's discussions about those problems. He finally reached the subject of the IPCs. They were, he said, in the process of developing into genuine centres of activity. In conclusion, he claimed that his report had shown one thing: the RILU now constituted a broad enough framework to allow joint work, despite individual differences of opinion with the syndicalists.

511 The only comment made by Resis on this is: 'As usual, the membership figures were highly dubious' (Resis 1964, p. 303).

Enderle wanted to follow this optimistic survey immediately with his own report on the work of the Central European Bureau. This proposal was rejected with the argument that the Executive Bureau was responsible for the MEB's activities. This was no doubt correct.⁵¹² But a report from the MEB would have brought much more concrete detail into the discussion than Lozovsky was able, or willing, to bring up in his own general survey. In that case, perhaps remarks might have been made on organisational points which were otherwise completely ignored.

The endeavours of the 21 delegates who spoke in the discussion were essentially devoted to supplementing Lozovsky's report with information from their own national organisations. In some cases their emphasis differed from Lozovsky's. This applied above all to the smaller independent organisations affiliated to the RILU such as the *Schiffahrtsbund*, the UdHuK, and the IWW minority represented by Hardy. Their speakers did not oppose Lozovsky's fundamental orientation towards work in the reformist mass organisations, but they did attempt to defend their organisations' right to exist alongside them. Most of the speeches, however, simply provided additional information, without questioning any of the perspectives put forward by Lozovsky. After all, the most fundamental problems had still to be discussed at other points of the congress agenda.⁵¹³ In his concluding statement, therefore, all he needed to do was add some supplementary comments on his position.⁵¹⁴ And the unanimously adopted resolution confirmed that the Executive Bureau had acted correctly on all essential matters.⁵¹⁵ The sole criticism raised was that it had not yet established close connections with all the member organisations of the RILU.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹² Enderle's proposal is only mentioned in the account published in *Inprekorr* (no. 7, 10 January 1923, p. 46). It is, however, referred to in some comments by other speakers in the course of the discussion, which are included in the minutes. Presumably the proposal, which was certainly made in German, was simply not picked up by the Russian stenographers.

⁵¹³ Two extra memoranda on the situation of the Czechoslovak trade union of agricultural workers and the agricultural workers' IPC are printed in *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 36–56 and 61–4.

⁵¹⁴ *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 56–60.

⁵¹⁵ *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 60. It should be said that the French delegation did not take part in the vote, because, as Monmousseau explained, the official affiliation of the CGTU to the RILU would not take place until after the discussion on the relationship between the latter and the Comintern.

⁵¹⁶ 'Resolution zum Bericht des Vollzugsbüros', *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 3–4.

Central political perspectives were treated under the agenda item headed 'the offensive of capital, Amsterdam's splitting activities and the united front'. The main speaker here was Heckert, and he illustrated these three watchwords by giving numerous examples from the trade-union struggles of the last few months. He was particularly concerned to prove that only the establishment of the united front offered the perspective of a victorious outcome. After innumerable defeats, what was required was the creation of strong organisations and a strong fighting front. He therefore repeated his warning against any attempt to split the trade unions. Such activity would not only assist the Amsterdam leaders, but also contribute to the victory of capital. This did not mean that the RILU was superfluous, because it was the only organisation that could create the united front.

Heckert's remarks were amplified by the Czechoslovak delegate Pavlik, who was mainly concerned to paint a picture of the consequences in his own country of the split in the trade unions and the creation of the MVS.⁵¹⁷

It was evident, as with the previous item on the agenda, that the speakers mainly based their remarks on the experiences of their own organisations, in order to defend them against attacks from other speakers, or just to provide information. As Heckert put it in his summing up, 'almost all the speakers did no more than report what had happened so far in their own country, and they said nothing about what might happen in the future',⁵¹⁸ or, to put it precisely, how a united front could be established. The French representative, however, made it clear that there were limits to this endeavour: a united front could not be established by a reunification of the CGT and the CGTU. A number of speakers criticised the proposed programme of the united front from the left. It was, they said, too opportunistic. It hardly differed from the programme put forward by the Amsterdamers.

Heckert strongly rejected the views of both the French and the leftists. If the French were not prepared for reunification, he said, that meant that in reality they were not in favour of a united front. This was an idea that would play a great role in the activities of the RILU in the future. In reply to the leftists, he said it was not a sign of opportunism to make the same demands as were made by the Amsterdamers. After all, not everything in fifty years of traditional trade-union experience was wrong. In any case, the fact was that the Amsterdamers would never be able to put into effect their own demands, correct as they were.

517 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 65–90; *Die Einheitsfront* 1923, pp. 3–29.

518 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 30. The discussion on this point is printed in 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 91–108.

This was proved by the most recent strike movements.⁵¹⁹ It should be said that the points raised in this debate were considerations of a very fundamental kind, which, if they had been thought through to a conclusion, would actually have brought up the question of whether the RILU's existence was justified. There were some other areas treated in the discussion as well: Hertha Sturm (Elena Stasova) spoke of the need to recruit women to the organisation, while Tan Malaka, the Indonesian revolutionary, related his experience of the united front in the Far East.

The final resolution, taking as its starting-point the offensive of capital and the attitude of the Amsterdammers, explained the need for a united front, for which it proposed a detailed programme. It also included instructions on tactics and organisation. It gave a particular warning against differences of opinion within the revolutionary forces, which could only work in favour of the reformists. But as yet the question of whether one could pass from the united front to organisational unification was not raised.⁵²⁰

Thus the tactics of the trade-union international had now been presented in outline. The next item, which followed logically, was the question of organisation, in other words what concrete structures and methods of work the unions belonging to the RILU ought to adopt. The importance attached to this question is shown by the fact that this particular item of the agenda took up a greater amount of time than any other. It occupied almost four sittings, against the two and a half devoted to the united front and slightly fewer than three on the RILU's relationship with the Comintern. Moreover, it was Lozovsky who delivered the main report, on which he had also worked out a proposed resolution.⁵²¹

While taking account of different situations in different countries, he endeavoured not only to lay bare the fundamental tendencies in trade-union development, but also to establish common guidelines for the revolutionary forces everywhere. The trade-union bureaucracies, he said, would increasingly become part of the bourgeois state apparatus, and would be more determined than ever to enforce splits by using the weapon of expulsion, but this should by no means lead revolutionaries to abandon the unions. (After 1929, a similar evaluation of the situation, delivered with much greater emphasis, would be used to justify exactly the opposite conclusion). Expulsions must be met with

519 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 109–16, and *Die Einheitsfront* 1923, pp. 30–7.

520 'Die Offensive des Kapitals und der Kampf um die Einheitsfront', *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 20–7, and *Die Einheitsfront* 1923, pp. 38–44.

521 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 116–40, and *Die Organisationsfrage*, pp. 3–26.

campaigns for reinstatement. At the same time, an intensive struggle for partial trade-union demands should be waged. These demands could not just be replaced with calls for the overthrow of capitalism, because that would mean simply leaving trade-union activities to the trade-union leaderships. Partial demands should be put forward, but they must be linked with the 'final goal of revolution'. Revolution could only be achieved by the day-to-day practical struggle of the masses.

What was most important of all, he said, was organisation. The expelled trade unionists must be united together, and the independent trade unions must be co-ordinated with the fractions organised by the party within the reformist trade unions. The smaller unions should be combined together to form industrial organisations (by 'amalgamation'). He opposed the federalism deriving from syndicalist traditions which was propagated above all in France. Instead he advocated centralism, in other words the reorganisation of the autonomous trade-based unions into industrial unions. At the same time, he opposed the idea of fusing the trade unions together into one single union, which would be subdivided into professional or industrial sections, as in the idea of One Big Union current in the English-speaking countries, or indeed the decision to establish the MVS in Czechoslovakia, which had particularly grave consequences for the RILU. He only made a passing reference to factory councils. They had lost the great political significance they had achieved in 1918–19, but they continued to be important as potential organs of workers' control in the factories. Accordingly, the adherents of the RILU should seize all opportunities of creating and strengthening them.

He then went on to comment in light of these organisational principles on the problems of the countries which were of greatest importance for the RILU. In Germany, he said, the creation of a really active joint working committee to co-ordinate the whole trade-union opposition was the task of the moment. In France, the CGTU must overcome its internal divisions by creating a centralised organisation on the basis of the industrial principle. The fight for unity would play a great role in this. In Great Britain, on the other hand, there was not even a central headquarters for the opposition; this must first be set up. In Italy, the task was to establish unity and at the same time destroy the Fascist trade unions. In the USA, the situation was difficult because the TUEL, the revolutionary fraction in the IWW and the small independent unions (attached to the United Labor Council) were at daggers drawn with each other, though they all proclaimed their commitment to the RILU.

He made brief remarks about a few other countries, also taking up the problem of the International Trade Secretariats (to be discussed later). In his conclusion he stressed the need to develop the press and literature of the

trade-union movement as well as to make a start at last with implementing the resolutions on work among women and young people which had already been passed by the founding congress but with little effect so far. It was clear from Lozovsky's speech, finally, that his conception of organisation, despite all his stress on fractional work in the mass trade unions with the aim of creating a strong indigenous foundation in each country, was liable to result in a split between the independent unions and the minorities within the mass trade unions, irrespective of any differences in trade-union structures from one country to another.

The other main speaker, Hais, limited himself to dealing with the specific situation in Czechoslovakia. He made no comments on other countries. His chief objective was to counter Lozovsky's criticisms by justifying the MVS's mode of organisation – as a unitary union – as being entirely appropriate to the needs of his country.⁵²²

The attitudes of the 17 speakers who took part in the discussion to the position put forward by Lozovsky were determined by their respective national experiences.⁵²³ The question of federalism or centralism was one important aspect of the debate. The speakers who emerged from the syndicalist tradition diverged most from him. It is true that none of them defended extreme anarchist conceptions of organisation. But Nin, for example, commented that the two principles of federalism and centralism had never before been so clearly contradictory to each other. Monmousseau defended the way the CGTU had handled matters. They elected a strong central authority at their congress, and called it federalism. But this had absolutely nothing to do with anarcho-syndicalism.⁵²⁴ Vecchi warned that the general position taken by the RILU against federalism would have repercussions in the Latin countries. Other speakers associated themselves with this warning as well. In general, though, the aim of the delegates was more to make sure that the particular traditions of syndicalism were respected than to put forward a fundamentally different form of organisation. The principle of establishing industrial organisations on a centralised basis, and the disciplined implementation of resolutions, were not questioned by the delegates.

522 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 141–6 and *Die Organisationsfrage* 1923, pp. 27–32.

523 11. *Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 146–74.

524 In his closing speech, Lozovsky remarked somewhat sarcastically that according to Monmousseau 'it is called centralism in Russian and federalism in French' (*Die Organisationsfrage* 1923, p. 41).

The principle of a single, united union was discussed with somewhat less heat. There were few people at the congress who defended this principle of organisation, apart from the Czechs. One of them was the representative of the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain from Germany. Despite this lack of support, the right of the MVS to adopt this particular structure was not questioned. Most of the speakers were more concerned to defend specific features of organisation in their country than to discuss tactics in general, as Lozovsky complained in his closing speech. In the case of representatives of independent trade unions – from the USA and Germany – this attitude led them to defend their own right to exist, although they were careful not to question the fundamental orientation of the RILU itself, as had happened at the founding congress.

After Hais and Lozovsky had delivered their closing speeches,⁵²⁵ therefore, it was possible for a committee simply to insert a number of small alterations and additions, related predominantly to the problems of specific countries, into Lozovsky's earlier draft resolution. This modified version was then adopted shortly before the end of the congress.⁵²⁶

The treatment of this item on the agenda also led to a surprising clarification of the question of 'red International Trade Secretariats'. After the communist leaders' experiences with the rejection of Russian attempts to gain admission to ITSS in the second half of 1922, it looked at one point as if they were moving in the direction of founding these new 'red secretariats' (see the previous section). Just before the RILU congress opened, at the Fourth Comintern Congress, Lozovsky had given a report on trade-union affairs, and he had said, as we have seen, that the foundation of 'red secretariats' was 'an immediate question'.⁵²⁷ A day later, however, in his concluding speech on the trade-union debate at the Comintern congress, he used a much more cautious formulation: in principle, we do not desire an international split, but if the workers are ready to follow us 'we shall not hesitate' to create our own international secretariats.⁵²⁸

525 They are printed in *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 174–89 and *Die Organisationsfrage* 1923, pp. 33–48.

526 The report of Lozovsky's committee is printed in *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 248–9. There is unfortunately no information on the final voting figures. The course of the discussion did not suggest that there would be opposing votes, but if there were, they would have been few in number. The final resolution is printed in *Die Organisationsfrage* 1923, pp. 49–61, and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 4–19.

527 *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses* 1922, p. 474 [English: *Toward the United Front* 2012, p. 556].

528 *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses* 1922, p. 540 [English: *Toward the United Front* 2012, p. 628].

The question emerged at the RILU congress for the first time when the report on the Executive Bureau's activities was being discussed. Iuzefovich, using Lozovsky's remarks on the activities of the IPCs as his starting-point, called for them to be given more responsible functions in the organisation. The Belgian delegate Léon Lesoil opposed this, adding that he was entirely against the creation of separate 'red' ITSS. In his final remarks on this item, Lozovsky did not himself take up a position on the political question, limiting himself to commenting on the organisational difficulties they had so far encountered.⁵²⁹ Five days later, however, in his report to the congress on questions of organisation, he did somewhat surprisingly make some further remarks about the IPCs. An IPC, he said, was 'in its essential nature not an organisational centre', but rather 'a purely intellectual organ, aimed at uniting different elements together in a single agreed conception'. He added that 'we do not think it serves our purpose to proceed to the establishment of red international federations'.⁵³⁰

In the course of the discussion following Lozovsky's statement, Walter, the representative of the *Schiffahrtsbund*, was the only person who reverted to the question of international organisation. He was in favour of the formation of what he called 'international organisation committees'.⁵³¹ What he wanted to achieve in this connection, he said, was to resuscitate the old project of a red seamen's international. Other speakers, however, did not take up this point. Not one of the speakers even mentioned the change of policy indicated in Lozovsky's speech. This was precisely because it was the Russians alone who were concerned with the problem. They had raised the question because they were the ones who suffered from the rejection of their membership by the existing ITSS. The delegates of the CGTU, some of whom had occasionally brought up the question of 'red secretariats', were now far too involved in discussing the relationship between the Comintern and the RILU, which was the next point on the agenda. The resolution on organisation voted by the congress therefore included a passage rejecting the idea of creating new International Trade Secretariats and insisting that the fight must go on for the inclusion of all the RILU's trade unions in the existing ITSS. The IPCs were admittedly also asked to continue their attempts to gain influence. But it was stressed now that their main activities in the sphere of organisation would be firstly to bring together the expelled trade unions, and secondly to extend

529 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 42, 45 and 59.

530 *Die Organisationsfrage* 1923, p. 23.

531 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 153–4.

their range to the extra-European countries which were beyond Amsterdam's 'jurisdiction'.⁵³²

It is very clear that a decision had been made a few days earlier which ran counter to the position repeatedly advocated up to that point by Lozovsky. Unfortunately, the materials in the RILU archive, in particular those on the second congress,⁵³³ provide no insight into this matter. In view of the consistency with which Lozovsky had expressed himself in the previous months, it is unlikely that he changed his mind without any outside involvement. There were presumably discussions of the subject in the context of the Fourth Comintern Congress, which was held just before the RILU congress, and the decision was probably made at that time. The Russian historian Karpachev implies this when he writes, without giving any indication of his sources, that Lozovsky's trade-union theses for the Fourth Comintern Congress had been subjected to criticism by 'leading members of the ECCI'.⁵³⁴ Although the matter must remain speculative in the present state of knowledge, it was fairly typical that all this vacillation on the question of 'red secretariats' left the RILU relatively unaffected. The consequences of the final decision were at least obvious. It would necessarily have a positive impact on endeavours to secure a united front, since the move to create 'red secretariats' would have immediately set up an almost insurmountable barrier to such an alliance. (Apart from this, 'red secretariats' would not have gained any influence in the Western European workers' movement at all comparable to that of the existing ITSS). It is, however, doubtful as to whether this change of line was evaluated positively, or indeed was even noticed, by Amsterdam, in view of the confrontations that had already taken place between the two internationals.

The most important event of the second congress was without doubt the renewed discussion about the relationship between the Comintern and the RILU, because what was at stake here was the adherence of the CGTU. It had, it is true, agreed at its congress held at the end of June in Saint-Étienne to send delegates to the RILU congress, but it had made its decision as to membership dependent on a change in the statutes: the reference to an 'organic link' between the two internationals would have to be removed. Lozovsky's declarations at the CGTU congress and then at the subsequent top-level discussions in the RILU had implied that he was prepared to make this necessary concession to the French.

532 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 59–60 and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 16–17.

533 See above, note 507.

534 Karpachev 1976, p. 153.

The Executive Committee of the CGTU had already drawn up a lengthy memorandum in September, outlining the course of the debate on this question in order to justify its position.⁵³⁵ It made a number of proposals to the congress for changes in the statutes, and, in particular, it proposed a resolution on relations between the Comintern and the RILU. This aimed to replace the permanent, fixed ('organic') relations prescribed by the statutes with a commitment to the implementation of joint actions by the two bodies. The aim of this was to emphasise the independence and equality of rights of the revolutionary trade unions vis-à-vis the parties, and to create a situation in which the reciprocal relationship no longer operated automatically but had to be repeatedly re-established. The CGTU had also asked for another ideological concession: though the dictatorship of the proletariat would be recognised in the conditions of admission to the RILU, its provisional character would be stressed.

The Bolshevik leadership reached a compromise agreement with the CGTU shortly before the beginning of the RILU congress. Lenin saw Lozovsky on 16 November or thereabouts to discuss the CGTU's position with him, after the CGTU delegation, which had already arrived in Moscow, had approached him with a request for a discussion.⁵³⁶ According to Lozovsky, the following dialogue took place between Lenin and himself: 'You know, I'm not particularly well informed about the whole of this matter. Tell me, are they moving towards us or away from us?' I replied 'They are moving towards us', and he responded 'Then we can give some ground'.⁵³⁷ On 18 November, Lenin saw Monmousseau and Semard, the spokesmen of the French delegation, and asked them to explain their point of view. He said he was prepared to support concessions. But they would have to take responsibility for making sure that the RILU did not become alienated from the Comintern.⁵³⁸

535 'La C.G.T. Unitaire et l'Internationale Syndicale Rouge', *La Vie ouvrière*, no. 176, 23 September 1922, and no. 177, 30 September 1922.

536 Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Biograficheskaja Khronika* vol. 12, p. 483.

537 S.A. Lozovsky, 'Iz vospominanii o V.I. Lenine', *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 7, 1966, pp. 105–12, here p. 111. At the 15th Congress of the AUCP (b), at the end of 1927 (this was the congress which expelled the members of the United Opposition around Trotsky and Zinoviev), Lozovsky also reported on his conversation with Lenin, and he contrasted Lenin's attitude with that of Zinoviev, who had expressed doubts about the correctness of making concessions to the French during the discussions of that time. (*Piatnadsatyi s'ezd VKP (b)*. *Stenograficheskii otchet*, 2 vols., Moscow, 1961, vol. 1, p. 703). If Zinoviev really did have such doubts, he certainly showed at the RILU congress that he knew how to fall into line with party discipline.

538 Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Biograficheskaja Khronika* vol. 12, pp. 487–8. See also the reports on this meeting with Lenin in Monmousseau, 'Nach dem Tode Lenins', *Die Rote Gewerk-*

The RILU leadership had been under pressure to move in this direction for a long time, and now the decision had finally been made.⁵³⁹ It was not without reason that Monmousseau had finally been designated to be the joint *rapporteur* on this item of the agenda. But the main speech was delivered by Nin, who gave the official report on behalf of the Executive Bureau.⁵⁴⁰ Because of his political origins, Nin symbolised by his very presence the RILU's claim to be an alliance between communists and syndicalists.

He accordingly began his speech with a historical justification of syndicalism as the movement which opposed the reformism of social democracy before 1914, which is no doubt not the way a Bolshevik speaker would have put it. The situation had been changed fundamentally, he went on, by the First World War, which had also brought with it a betrayal by the syndicalist leaders, and by the Russian Revolution. He then gave a thorough account of the course of the discussions since the establishment of the ITUC, going on to analyse the various tendencies which had developed in the anarchist and syndicalist camps since the war. The anarcho-syndicalists had turned out to be out and out opponents of the RILU because they were opposed to the Russian Revolution. The attitude one took towards the Russian Revolution was decisive, he said. 'We cannot tolerate any attack on the Russian revolution, because it is also our revolution'. He sharply criticised the attempts that had been made to organise a syndicalist international, referring in particular to the speech by Shapiro⁵⁴¹ at the Berlin conference of June 1922, who had appeared there as the representative of a syndicalist opposition in the Russian trade unions which was in fact non-existent.

Nin spoke on behalf of those few syndicalists who were prepared to work in the RILU without any reservations, but the real target audience of his speech was the members of the syndicalist majority who were prepared to join, but

schafts-Internationale, no. 4, April 1924, pp. 171–2, and Pierre Semard, 'Partei und Gewerkschaften', in *Lenin und die Internationale. Erinnerungen von Zeitgenossen*, Berlin-GDR, 1983, pp. 224–8.

539 The formal agreement of the Politbureau of the RCP was doubtless also necessary, but there is no evidence of this in the material preserved in the RILU archive. Some days earlier, however, on 14 November, the communist fraction in the VTsSPS had already decided to take a conciliatory attitude towards the French request (RGASPI 95/1/27/200).

540 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 190–210, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, pp. 3–24.

541 Nin even referred to him as 'Comrade Shapiro' (see *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 208, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, p. 21).

only on certain conditions. This was true, first and foremost, of the CGTU, but it also applied to the 'Vecchi faction' in the USI and doubtless also to the *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios* from the CNT, who were not represented at this congress. The RILU would have to reach an agreed settlement with them, he said. He himself supported the resolutions of the founding congress of the RILU on the need for co-operation between the two internationals. It was necessary to continue co-ordinating their activities, since otherwise one would fall into national particularism. He concluded his remarks by appealing to the French to take the same view. He did not, however, make any comment on the concrete content of their proposals.

Monmousseau followed immediately afterwards. He made an emphatic plea for compromise.⁵⁴² The conflict over relations between the RILU and the CGTU was not about a merely formal question. The fight of the anarchists against the revolution was there in the background. The anarchists had always wanted to create their own international, and they were only looking for excuses to separate the revolutionary trade-union movement from Moscow. Their counter-revolutionary attitude therefore ultimately had exactly the same effect as the behaviour of the socialists. The syndicalists must be explicitly distinguished from the anarchists, however. There were different forces among the syndicalists too though, and a section of them, led by Jouhaux, Dumoulin and Merheim, had become counter-revolutionary.

The demand for an 'organic link' with the Comintern had brought uncertainty and confusion into the situation, he said, because the existing communist party had not yet shown that it was revolutionary. To demand a link with the communist party was to provoke many revolutionary workers who were under anarchist influence into leaving the movement. That is why they had opposed the idea of a link at the Saint-Étienne congress, while at the same time affirming their commitment to the Russian Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. They did not want this to mean a break with the Communist International, with the genuine forces of revolution. They therefore made the request 'to alter the formula for coordination ... and to remove from the statutes everything that could give rise to a split in the trade union movement'.

He was opposed by the Italian Tresso, who represented the communist trade unionists in the CGL, who were not uninfluenced by the latter union's traditional opposition to syndicalism.⁵⁴³ Although he well understood Mon-

542 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 211–26, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, pp. 25–40.

543 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 227–9, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, pp. 41–9.

mousseau's position, he was sharply critical of the ultimative tone – 'if we do not get this the CGTU will not join' – in which the demand for trade-union autonomy was being made. Syndicalism was doomed to destruction in any case, since modern industrial development had cut away the ground on which it stood. If one now removed the 'organic link', the co-operative labours of both organisations would be replaced by competitive rivalry. Despite all necessary criticism of individual communist parties, what was important was to strengthen their revolutionary character and in this way to strengthen their influence on the trade unions. He therefore called on the congress not to alter the statutes.

The last speech on this item of the agenda came from the representative of the Comintern, Zinoviev.⁵⁴⁴ He went right back to basic principles, starting from the First International, which united the party and the trade unions, and proceeding to the Second International, in which they were divided, and from which the anarchists and syndicalists were both expelled. He then referred to the Third International, which was seeking to form a fresh relationship to all revolutionary forces. Finally, he moved on to consider the ideas of the French. He thanked Monmousseau for condemning the anarchists. In view of the need to fight shoulder to shoulder with the syndicalists of the Latin countries, he said that they were ready 'to make concessions to those prejudices which are unfortunately still to be found among some good revolutionary elements of the workers' movement ... We declare openly that the French workers' movement is worth more to us than a dozen theoretical constructions'. If they held onto the principle of revolutionary co-operation between the Comintern and the RILU, the precise organisational details were not so significant. He therefore declared that the Communist International was ready to accept the changes demanded by the CGTU.

After this, the VTsSPS representative Dogadov read a resolution put forward in the name of the Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Bulgarian delegations, which stated that, in view of the need to have a united revolutionary *bloc*, they accepted the French proposals. This resolution was adopted unanimously.⁵⁴⁵ There was a series of smaller changes, on the meaning of

544 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 229–41, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, pp. 50–61.

545 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 241 and 304; *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, p. 62; and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, p. 28. A decision by the Comintern leadership had obviously preceded this, making this concession obligatory for the communist majority among the congress delegates, as Zinoviev's speech had already indicated. This was confirmed some years later

the dictatorship of the proletariat, for instance, but the main point was that the exchange of representatives between the respective leaderships would be replaced by an action committee to co-ordinate whatever common activities were required.⁵⁴⁶ Semard then read a statement in the name of the CGTU representatives and the delegates of the USI minority in which the congress was thanked for its decision. Monmousseau then announced the official affiliation of the CGTU to the RILU.⁵⁴⁷

This development had a minor sequel the next day, when the congress passed an appeal to all syndicalist organisations, which was proposed by Monmousseau.⁵⁴⁸ This called on them to follow the example of the CGTU. One specific target of this was the anarcho-syndicalist congress scheduled for the end of December, which was warned against splitting the international revolutionary trade-union movement. There was a place in the RILU for all revolutionary forces, the resolution claimed. As we know, the anarcho-syndicalists did not allow themselves to be dissuaded from their plan even by the threat to bring about the affiliation of the syndicalist organisations to the RILU against the will of their leaders, in other words to split them.

With the passing of this resolution, the second RILU congress had now fulfilled its most important objective. A considerable part of the syndicalist movement was now firmly attached to the RILU. It had thereby acquired a basis of support which went beyond the framework of the communist parties alone. But this was simply the ratification of a process that had already occurred in the months that followed the founding congress. This was shown by the fact that once the four reporters had spoken, one of whom – Tresso – brought forward the ‘orthodox social democratic’ arguments against syndicalism and thus articulated the uneasiness undoubtedly felt by some communists, there were no further questions raised. The whole decision came about without any further discussion. This success was no doubt an adequate argument against all those who had reservations.

in a roundabout way by Nin (Nin 1978, p. 122). There is no material in the RILU archive bearing on the matter.

546 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 305–7; *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, pp. 62–4; and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 28–31.

547 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, p. 241; *Die Rote Gewerkschafts- und die Kommunistische Internationale* 1923, p. 64.

548 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, p. 255, and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, p. 52.

A few other agenda items were still outstanding. They were dealt with within two days without much discussion. Semard spoke on the struggle against militarism and reaction, in which context he was able to refer back to the long tradition of such struggles in the French trade-union movement. To fight against militarism was, he said, a very special duty for the trade unions. The struggle against imperialism and colonialism was also related to this fight. This was particularly valid now because the Versailles Treaty bore within it the seeds of future wars. Semard's declarations, and the resolution which was adopted, without discussion, after his speech, were also the first attempt by the RILU to gain some understanding of the new phenomenon of fascism, just after Mussolini's seizure of power. Fascism was analysed here as a particularly brutal form of dictatorship, which had become communism's main antagonist.⁵⁴⁹

Antselovich delivered the report of the mandate commission.⁵⁵⁰ According to this, 41 countries, and 12 million trade unionists, including 12 national trade-union centres, were represented at the congress. This was already somewhat reduced from the 15–17 million claimed at the founding congress the previous year. There were 213 delegates at the congress, 100 with deliberative rights, and 113 with a consultative voice. This meant that the number of people present at the congress was perceptibly smaller than one and a half years earlier. There was no discussion about this contrast, however. They were probably satisfied with the result, partly because some of the syndicalist organisations were now no longer represented and partly because, considered as a whole, on a worldwide scale, the whole trade-union movement had in any case suffered a decline.

George Hardy delivered the report on inflation and unemployment. Both were increasing at breakneck speed. One could not of course abolish these things completely under capitalism. But one could organise the unemployed, bind them closely to the trade unions, and lead the struggle against the rise in prices, and this would inevitably culminate in the overthrow of capitalism. In this case too, a resolution was unanimously voted without any discussion.⁵⁵¹ It was the same with Antselovich's report on the relationship between the trade unions and the co-operatives. He called for the latter to be strengthened, but at the same time he warned against the reformist illusion that capitalism could

549 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 241–6; *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 34–6.

550 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 247–8.

551 11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov 1923, pp. 249–53, and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 33–4.

be overcome in this way, and he made a general appeal for the cooperatives to be revolutionised.⁵⁵²

Heller's report, which dealt with the workers' movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, did however provoke some discussion.⁵⁵³ Already at the founding congress of the RILU, attempts had been made to gain a foothold in these countries, where there were two advantages: a proletariat was just coming into existence, and Amsterdam was, in practice, absent from the scene. Heller gave numerous examples of how industrialisation was taking root owing to the interest of the colonial powers in securing cheap raw materials, guaranteed export markets and a badly remunerated labour force. This situation had led to the first struggles and the first trade-union organisations, which were of course still dominated by guild traditions, strengthened by the influence of bourgeois nationalist movements. He unfolded a whole programme of demands aimed at developing an independent trade-union movement, which would allow the social interests of the workers to be independently represented. The emphasis here was strikingly different from the line being taken by the Comintern at the same time. The Comintern called for an alliance with nationalist movements in the colonial countries against imperialism.⁵⁵⁴

Two of the speakers in the discussion – from Indonesia and India – underlined the revolutionary potential of nationalist mass movements. They could

552 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 253–6, and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 37–9.

553 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 257–62, and Heller 1923, pp. 3–25.

554 Resis comments on this as follows: (1964, pp. 330–1): 'The Profintern's policy on the colonial question differed from that of the Comintern in three ways. Firstly, the Comintern spoke out in favour of an anti-imperialist front in the East as the counterpart of the proletarian united front in the West, because it placed a much stronger emphasis on the "progressive" side of the colonial bourgeoisie. The Comintern emphasised the need for the workers in the colonies to build an alliance with the revolutionary sections of the colonial bourgeoisie. The Comintern's theses contained no extensive condemnation of the Guomindang, Gandhism or Kemalism; they simply warned revolutionaries against bourgeois "vacillation" and "treachery". The Profintern resolution, on the other hand, laid greater weight than the Comintern resolution on the "reactionary" side of the indigenous bourgeoisie and only made a passing reference to the "anti-imperialist front". In the RILU's resolution, for instance, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties – such as the Guomindang – were described as hypocritical and half-hearted groups, and one must take over the leadership of the peasant masses in the struggle against them. A short time later, during the Chinese revolution of 1925–7, the Comintern line would look very different from this, and the RILU too would follow its instructions.'

be a source of forces for the class struggle, and therefore one should not mount a frontal attack on them. But these were only remarks based on the concrete experience of the individuals in question. The great strategic debates on the subject would only develop after 1925, in the course of the Chinese revolution. The first speaker in the discussion of Heller's report was Garden, who had originally been announced as delivering a second report. He explained the significance of the Pacific region and pointed out that the Australian trade unions were endeavouring to organise a conference of trade unionists from all the states that bordered on the Pacific Ocean. This would be the starting-point for the later Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.⁵⁵⁵ Unfortunately, the minutes do not tell us to what extent the interventions made in the debate on Heller's report had an impact on the wording of the final resolution, and whether they were accepted unanimously or there were people who voted against them.⁵⁵⁶

Andreev gave the final report, which dealt with the situation of the Soviet trade unions.⁵⁵⁷ They had been given new tasks since the introduction of the New Economic Policy the previous year, and this had led to a change in their structure. They were now no longer an openly 'governmentalised' organ. They had gone back to representing the interests of workers, even though the state itself was a workers' state, and they had therefore returned to a basis of individual membership. The number of members had accordingly declined from 8 million at the beginning of 1922 to 5 million now. On their international activities, Andreev simply noted that the Russian trade unions unconditionally aspired to form links with the Western European proletariat, and they would not let themselves be prevented from doing this by the obstacles raised by Amsterdam. The congress simply took note of this declaration. A resolution on this item of the agenda was neither presented nor passed.

All the congress had to do in conclusion was discuss a number of changes to the statutes of the RILU.⁵⁵⁸ For the most part, these derived from the adoption of the French proposals. A number of others, introduced by the Russian delegation, were related to the mode of representation at congresses, on the Central Council, and on the Executive Bureau. The Central Council was made more representative by increases in the number of votes allotted to each national

555 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 262–4.

556 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 316–20; Heller 1923, pp. 27–31, and *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen*, pp. 40–4.

557 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 264–74. See also A. Andrejew 1922.

558 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 274–5. The text of the new statutes is printed in: *Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, pp. 45–50.

association.⁵⁵⁹ The Executive Bureau was to be elected by the congress, and its membership was expanded to 15 people, whose national affiliation was to be determined according to a fixed formula. At the same time, replacements ('candidates') were to be elected, and this would ensure that any elected member who was repeatedly absent would have a replacement available. But the Executive Bureau had to make the final decision on this. This was already an indication that the RILU had great difficulty in guaranteeing the stability of its leadership. At least a statutory way of providing replacements had now been provided.

Further changes in the statutes had the objective of regulating the RILU's finances. Since few national trade-union centres were formally affiliated to it, regular contributions would be raised from the minorities belonging to it by asking them to pay for 'propaganda stamps'. Finally, the section on the establishment of links with the International Trade Secretariats, which had been impossible to achieve, was modified by taking into account the International Propaganda Committees. The latter were, however, now explicitly placed under the discipline of the RILU. This was also a way of sending the message that they would not be able to convert themselves into new 'red trade internationals'.

The Executive Bureau elected after the adoption of the change in the statutes consisted of the following people (with candidate members in brackets): for Russia, Lozovsky, Tomsky, and Kalnin (Mel'nichansky, Ianson and Dogadov); for Germany, Heckert (Enderle); for France, Monmousseau (Jacob and Semard); for Czechoslovakia, Hais (Pavlik); for Italy, Tresso (Vecchi); for Spain and South America, Nin (Lomonegi); for Great Britain, Watkins (Smith, Clark and Davies); for the USA, Foster (Johnstone); for Australia, Garden; and for the East, Kunitaro Ande. There was no representative from Scandinavia, the Balkans or Poland. This was a deliberate decision. While in Northern Europe no definitive decision had yet been taken on whether to join the RILU, in the case of the Balkans and Poland the situation of illegality made it difficult to proceed to an election. Directly after the Executive Bureau had been elected, it appointed Lozovsky as its General Secretary. An Auditing Committee of five people was also elected to

559 The new statutes state: 'The Central Council will be composed in the following way: national associations with 5 to 50,000 members will send one representative, with 50–300,000 two representatives, with 300–700,000 three representatives, with 700,000 to 2 million four representatives, and those with over 2 million members will send six representatives with a deliberative voice' (*Beschlüsse und Resolutionen* 1923, p. 47). The expression 'national association' referred to the total number of members of the RILU in a given country, and it therefore included both directly affiliated organisations and minorities in reformist trade unions.

check on the management of the finances. It consisted of Andreev, Lepse, Švab, Schmidt and Bernard.⁵⁶⁰ Immediately after the congress, and with the aim of lightening the burden on the Executive Bureau, the structure of the RILU's leadership was supplemented by the appointment of a secretariat, consisting of Lozovsky, Kalnin and Nin, which had the task of 'settling all lesser matters itself, and fixing the agenda of the Executive Bureau'.⁵⁶¹

The congress had to make one further, rather minor, decision. A committee on the situation in the USA proposed that the three bodies which had declared their support for the RILU – the United Labor Council of the independent trade unions, the IWW minority and the opposition in the AFL grouped around the TUEL – set up an Action Committee to co-ordinate their activities. A conference was to be called to that end. The representatives of the TUEL protested sharply against this proposal. Their spokesman was Arne Swabeck. He opposed giving equal rights to the organisations which stood outside the AFL, and he demanded that the TUEL be recognised as the main representative of the RILU in the USA. But he was unable to win this battle.⁵⁶² (In reality, the Red International Committee which was formed as a result of this decision did not play a very great role, since the trade-union work of the party was centred on the AFL and the committee was again and again paralysed by vehement disagreements over whether this orientation was correct).⁵⁶³

Now all that remained was for Lozovsky to give his concluding speech. The decisions they had taken, he said, would only become significant when they had been put into practice. The whole of the delegates' energy would need to be directed towards this when they returned home. They still represented no more than a minority faced with a whole world of enemies. But in two or three years,

560 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 275–6.

561 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale. An den dritten Kongreß der R.G.I. in Moskau am 5. Juli 1924*, Berlin, 1924, p. 261.

562 *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 276. He suppressed all mention of this controversy in his report in the TUEL organ on the congress (Arne Swabeck, 'The R.I.L.U. World Congress', *Labor Herald*, no. 1, March 1923, pp. 22–4). Even so, he was able to refer to the TUEL as the 'official representative' of the RILU in the USA, because, although the Executive Bureau at its sitting on 5 December reaffirmed the congress decision to co-ordinate the activities of all forces supporting the RILU in the USA in a committee, it also recognised the TUEL as its official representative. At the same time, however, the TUEL was expected to include representatives of the United Labor Council and the IWW minority in its bureau, something which never actually happened (RGASPI 534/3/24/30).

563 See the material on the years 1923–4 in the Earl Browder Papers, Series 2–124. A later verdict from the Executive Bureau was this: 'Apart from differences of opinion and fruitless debates, nothing of any significance ... can be said' (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 248).

the millions of people enrolled in the army of the Amsterdamers would have melted away, because the logic of history was on the side of the RILU. Pavlik responded to this optimistic view in the name of the congress by thanking the Russian proletariat for its hospitality. Then Monmousseau, who had in a certain sense stood at the centre of the congress's discussions, solemnly declared that it had now finished its labours.

The second congress of the RILU marked the end of the debate between the Bolsheviks and the syndicalists over their mutual relationship. The fate of the Russian anarchists, which had moved the syndicalist delegates so strongly during the first congress, now became of very subordinate significance. Since their most prominent ringleaders had been released in the meantime thanks to the intervention of the syndicalists during the first congress, and they had now left the country, an exodus also joined by Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, there was only one prominent case that remained, that of Alexander Shapiro, and this had already been dealt with just before the second congress met.

He had accompanied Goldman and Berkman when they left Russia in December 1921. But their hope that they would be able to take part in the international anarchist congress at the end of the year in Berlin was not to be realised. They arrived after it had ended, but they immediately began to engage in extensive propaganda activities. Shapiro played an outstanding part in the international syndicalist conference which met in June 1922 (see section 2 of this chapter). He did not, however, see himself as an émigré and did his best to get back to Russia.⁵⁶⁴ He contacted the Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Chicherin, who was an old acquaintance from the time when they were both exiles in Britain, and was currently in Berlin on a diplomatic mission. Chicherin assured him that the Russian government would do nothing against him when he returned home, and he helped him to send his luggage back by placing diplomatic couriers at his service. He arrived in Moscow in mid-August, and he was arrested two weeks later.

An international campaign of solidarity started immediately.⁵⁶⁵ The RILU was placed under some pressure, particularly from France. It was no doubt in order to avoid getting into any further difficulties with the CGTU that the Executive Bureau undertook measures, jointly with the VTsSPS, to obtain Shapiro's

⁵⁶⁴ There is a description of the 'troubled odyssey of Alexander Schapiro' in Thorpe (1989, pp. 238–44).

⁵⁶⁵ 'Pour Schapiro. Un Appell du Bureau Syndicaliste International des Ouvriers révolutionnaires', *Le Libertaire*, 6–13 October 1922.

release.⁵⁶⁶ But before he could make contact with the French delegation to the RILU congress, he was expelled from Russia. All he could do was send a letter warning the CGTU not to submit to the RILU and thereby become an appendage of the Comintern.⁵⁶⁷ (When he arrived back in Berlin, he founded an anarcho-syndicalist journal together with other Russian émigrés, and he subsequently played an important part in the leadership of the IWMA).⁵⁶⁸

The dominant tendency in the CGTU, around Monmousseau, was in fact no longer particularly interested in the fate of the Russian anarchists, and certainly not in those without an international reputation. Only May Piqueray of the Metalworkers' Federation of the CGTU⁵⁶⁹ had asked Goldman and Berkman in Berlin for the addresses of Moscow anarchists, and when she arrived in Moscow she visited them, taking all necessary measures to avoid detection. One thing she found shocking was the luxurious nature of the official receptions at the congress, if only because of the sharp contrast between the abundant supply of food and the shortages that were still evident in the country as a whole. At a reception for the French delegation, she confronted Trotsky over the suppression of the anarchists and particularly over the Kronstadt affair, which Trotsky justified. On a later occasion, she again approached Trotsky, together with the secretary of the metalworkers' federation, and asked him for the release of two Russian anarchists. This appeal was finally successful.⁵⁷⁰ But after this the fate of the Russian anarchists and syndicalists was no longer an issue for the RILU. It would not play a role in any later congress of the organisation.

566 RGASPI 534/3/23/200, 206, 209 and 215. See also the correspondence between Sandomirsky and Lozovsky in *Le Libéraire*, 1–8 December 1922.

567 'Après l'expulsion de Schapiro', *Le Libéraire*, 1–8 December 1922.

568 On this, see chapter 4, section 5, note 41.

569 She, together with the federation's secretary, represented only one of the industrial federations of the CGTU, and not a very important one at that. The federations had sent 14 representatives, in addition to the delegates sent directly by the CGTU, but they only took part in the congress as guests (*11. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 247). May Picqueray described their stay in Russia in her autobiography (1979, pp. 83–114). The CGTU metalworkers' federation was dominated until its congress at the end of July 1923 by anarcho-syndicalists. Later on, the supporters of the RILU gained the upper hand (V. Vaksov 1924, p. 46).

570 See also the extract from the report of the metalworkers' delegates on this subject, printed in International Committee for Political Prisoners (ed.) 1925, pp. 102–3. (It was not possible to obtain a copy of the whole report, which was printed at the time in the organ of the metalworkers' federation). The above publication also contains (on pp. 92–102) the report of one of the freed anarchists about his journey through the Russian prison system.

The second RILU congress also set the framework for a series of conferences of IPCs. Representatives from the following branches of industry met together after the end of the RILU congress: transport, metalworking, mining, leather-working, printing, woodworking, building, chemicals, agriculture, textiles, and clothing. There were also meetings of office employees and teachers.⁵⁷¹

That was a smaller number of groups than had assembled at the founding congress of the RILU, where there had been 15 meetings of separate branches, although not all of these had been really representative conferences. Thus the second meeting of workers in the clothing industry was now counted as its first conference, since the previous year's meeting had only been between the leadership of the relevant Russian trade union and a small number of delegates. Moreover, the IPCs established in 1921 had not really functioned in every case. This was shown by the fact that only some of the IPCs had been able to hold meetings in the period between the two RILU congresses, and when they had it had been in the context of congresses of the corresponding International Trade Secretariat.

Thus the central place in the discussions of the IPCs, after detailed reports had been read out, was usually occupied by questions of organisation and the working out of statutes and action programmes. Although the IPCs were also faced with the problem of combining independent organisations with minorities within the reformist trade unions, their objective of influencing the ITSS had been fixed in advance by the RILU congress. Nevertheless, there were several cases – metalworking, building, and leather-working – where the French delegates tried to take the initiative in creating red ITSS. They were defeated by the refusal of all other representatives to follow their example. The metalworkers rejected a French initiative of this kind, but even so, they wanted to underline the growth in their influence by renaming themselves the 'International Organisation Committee'. The Executive Bureau subsequently reversed this decision.⁵⁷² They clearly did not want to give the impression that any action by the RILU would jeopardise the united front policy to which the organisation was committed.

The most influential committee continued to be that of the transport workers, whose delegates now claimed to speak for more than 1.6 million workers.

571 The minutes of the second RILU congress do not contain any accounts of the conferences of the IPCs. There are, however, extensive reports in: *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 12, December 1922, pp. 887–99 and *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 15, April 1923 (special issue entitled 'The Conferences of the International Propaganda Committees'). See also Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 58–9.

572 RGASPI 534/3/24/43.

The transport workers' IPC was able to build on a number of meetings it had held since its foundation, which had, for example, made possible the integration of the seamen, though there had been much controversy over this the previous year. They had also added a special sector in the shape of the port bureaux. The transport workers could also demonstrate that they had taken steps to implement the link with the colonial countries proclaimed at the RILU congress. A special transport workers' meeting had been organised in March in connection with the First Congress of Toilers of the Far East. Delegates from China and Indonesia now took part in the transport workers' IPC. Important decisions on questions of organisation were made, although there was no wish to announce the existence of a counter-organisation to the ITF.⁵⁷³ It was impossible to foresee that the political developments of the next few months would bring surprising changes, precisely in this area.

The IPCs continued to have their main offices in Moscow, by and large, because the Russian trade unions continued as before to be their main support. Even so, the RILU immediately endeavoured to broaden their base of support. The Executive Bureau decided on 5 December 1922 to issue a special propaganda badge all over the world to help finance the IPCs.⁵⁷⁴ The most important step forward was undoubtedly the publication of printed information sheets, at least in German (and, if possible, in other Western languages). This was first done in the spring and summer of 1923, thanks to the efforts of the Central European Bureau. Berlin became the most important point of support for the organisation of the IPCs (despite the fact that their head offices continued to be located in Russia).⁵⁷⁵

It was noticeable that no conferences took place in cases where the affiliation of a Russian trade union to an ITS had been set in train (as with the food trade workers) or where it looked to be possible (as with the postal workers). The IPC of workers in the food trade had clearly not been active after the founding congress of the RILU, and no IPC of postal workers had been set up at all. The Russian trade unions, which here too would have given the essential support, obviously had entirely different priorities. What was important to them was the chance to affiliate with an International Trade Secretariat.⁵⁷⁶ On 7 May

573 There is a short survey of this conference in A. Khain 1923, pp. 19–21. See also the report of the transport workers' IPC to the conference: in *Mezhdunarodnyi komitet propagandy transportnykh rabochikh, August 1921 g.–Noiabr' 1922 g.*, Moscow, 1922.

574 RGASPI 534/3/24/30.

575 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 105–6.

576 This can be seen from the surveys of the activities of all the IPCs from the second RILU congress onwards. (See 'Die Tätigkeit der Internationalen Propagandakomitees [Dezem-

1924, the RILU secretariat decided to keep the IPC of the food trade workers in existence – for, after all, the CGTU-affiliated food workers' trade union had not been admitted into the International Union of Organisations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades (IUF) – but without the Russians, who were expected to withdraw from it. The food trade workers' IPC would then be limited to independent trade unions which had not been admitted to the IUF and oppositional minorities within Amsterdam unions.⁵⁷⁷ The decision to withdraw from the food trade workers' IPC was confirmed at the congress of Russian food trade workers held in the same month.⁵⁷⁸

The teachers' IPC represents a special case, since the first congress of the Pedagogic International had been held in the meantime, in August 1922 in Paris. It received its main support from the teachers' union of the CGTU, which was affiliated to the RILU through its national centre, although it also included some teachers' organisations affiliated to Amsterdam. The Pedagogic International's programme was, however, criticised by the teachers' IPC conference for its 'petty-bourgeois pacifism'.⁵⁷⁹ The Executive Bureau then discussed the matter with the teachers' IPC. A committee was set up, with the authoritative participation of N.K. Krupskaja, and this worked out a revolutionary platform. It condemned pacifism and subordinated the struggle of the teachers for improvements in their material position to the revolutionary class struggle under the leadership of the proletariat.

In April 1923, the RILU's Executive Bureau called a meeting in Berlin with representatives of the revolutionary teachers of Western Europe. This led to a *rapprochement* with the Pedagogic International. At the end of September, the Russian teachers' union resolved to join it. Other, smaller, communist-controlled teachers' unions followed. Various difficulties – among other things the political situation in Germany – delayed the next congress of the Pedagogic International until August 1924. This congress confirmed the affiliation of the Russians.⁵⁸⁰ It was now renamed 'International of Educational Workers', in order to emphasise its political character. Nevertheless, although it showed clear sympathies with the RILU and the majority of its members were affiliated

ber 1922 bis Juli 1923]', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 8, August 1923, pp. 742–8, and the appropriate sections of *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 105–69).

577 RGASPI 534/3/84 and *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 61–2 (there the decision is incorrectly presented as having been made by the Executive Bureau, and Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 116–17, repeat this mistake).

578 Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 117.

579 The following paragraph is based on Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 127–41.

580 The congress documents were printed in *Lehrer-Internationale*, no. 1, October 1924.

to the RILU, it did not commit itself to either of the internationals, continuing to insist on its independence.⁵⁸¹ On the other hand, this made a separate IPC of teachers superfluous; it was dissolved at the end of 1923 by the Executive Bureau after the Pedagogic International had called for this.⁵⁸² Events in the educational sphere had a further consequence: the plans of the IFTU to found a teachers' union under its own aegis were stymied for the moment.⁵⁸³ The IFTU made a new attempt to do this in 1926, but the International Trade Secretariat of teachers only became an effective force in the spring of 1928, after the impact of the 'left turn' of the RILU on the International of Educational Workers had caused the alienation of the socialist teachers' unions from it.⁵⁸⁴

There is no doubt that the second RILU congress led to a consolidation of the organisation. On the other hand, the breakthrough which had still been expected in 1921 did not take place. In 1921, it had been claimed that roughly 15 million workers were affiliated to the RILU out of a total of 40 million organised trade unionists. Now only 12 million members were claimed. It was true that the IFTU had also suffered losses, but these were slightly smaller. In France, the total membership of the trade unions had fallen drastically since the defeats of 1919 and the spring of 1920. This tendency to decline was strengthened by the split. In Italy, the onslaught of Fascism had had fatal consequences for the trade unions. There were also other countries where the shift to the political

581 Thus the report on the statutes, delivered at the 1924 congress, states: 'Comrades, our international is autonomous. It is attached neither to Amsterdam nor to Moscow ... We are not autonomous for autonomy's sake, but because we want unity ... We therefore say that we remain autonomous and wish to retain a *connection for the purposes of information* with Amsterdam as well as with Moscow' (*Lehrer-Internationale*, no. 1, October 1924, p. 7, italics in the original).

582 RGASPI 534/3/47/222-4 and *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 60.

583 At the end of 1923, the IFTU once again called on teachers' representatives to attend a founding congress set for April 1924 in Leipzig, but it had to call it off because of a lack of response. The Pedagogic International reacted to the IFTU's appeal by itself calling a conference to Leipzig, to confront Amsterdam with the proof that it already comprised the majority of teachers' unions. This then became unnecessary with the IFTU's abandonment of its own project. See the documentation in *Lehrer-Internationale*, no. 6, May 1924, pp. 1-3, and also Golub and Shilovich 1989, pp. 139-40. Amsterdam's attempts to organise the teachers were certainly also hampered by the fact that in 1922 the driving force in the proposal to establish a new union had been the IFTU secretary Edo Fimmen. He had changed his views since the spring of 1923 and was now an advocate of forming a united front with the communist trade unions. As a result of this, he lost his position in the IFTU in summer 1923 and was from then on simply the general secretary of the ITF.

584 See Schnorbach 1989, pp. 34-40.

right had not remained without impact. According to the official membership figures given by the IFTU itself, its numbers had fallen gradually since 1919: they went down from 23,170,006 at the end of 1919 to 22,701,103 in 1920, 21,991,615 in 1921, and 18,574,330 in 1922.⁵⁸⁵

While the RILU asserted that at least a third of the members of the IFTU were under its influence,⁵⁸⁶ the IFTU's calculations on the relative influence of the two internationals were based only on the numbers directly affiliated to each one, thus ignoring the influence of the communists in its own ranks.⁵⁸⁷ Despite this, it can hardly be said that the communists had succeeded in making a real breakthrough into the international trade-union movement. They had unquestionably established themselves as a strong minority. A judgement as to how far they would be able to increase their influence in the future would depend primarily on an analysis of each specific national situation. When reports were presented to international congresses, however, there was very rarely any reference to the strength of different tendencies within each of the individual trade unions. There was one area in which the RILU could really claim to have the advantage over Amsterdam: its activities were a truer reflection of its name. The IFTU barely looked beyond Europe (at most to North America), whereas from the very beginning its communist rival established a large number of contacts with what would later be called the 'Third World'; and was able to demonstrate at its second congress that it was present everywhere.⁵⁸⁸

The second congress was attended by 213 delegates, which was far fewer than the founding congress with its 380 delegates, and this was itself an indication that the influence of the communist trade unions had declined somewhat, or perhaps more accurately had stagnated in an overall trade-union movement which was itself in decline, although the figure for the delegates at the founding congress had certainly been distorted by the presence of representatives of a number of very small syndicalist trade unions. The reduction in the number of IPC conferences from 15 in 1921 to 13 in 1922 similarly indicated a stagnation

585 *Erstes Jahrbuch des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes*, Amsterdam, 1922, pp. 165–6; *Zweites statistisches Jahrbuch des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1923/24*, Amsterdam, 1924, p. 171.

586 Lozovsky claimed this in his report to the second congress on the activities of the Executive Bureau (*II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, p. 23).

587 In this way the IFTU arrived at figures of communist strength of 7,069,000 at the end of 1921 and 5,358,064 at the end of 1922 (*Erstes Jahrbuch* 1922, p. 166; *Zweites statistisches Jahrbuch* 1924, p. 171).

588 See the data given in *II. Kongress Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov* 1923, pp. 23–4 and 247.

or slight decline. Statistics were provided at the second congress for the first time on the way the delegates were subdivided into different trades, and this allows us to see where the communists had most influence. 25 percent were metalworkers and 18.6 percent transport workers, followed by 14.1 percent building workers, and 9.7 percent miners. The printers, leather-workers and clothing workers each represented 7.2 percent of the delegates.⁵⁸⁹

The consolidation of the RILU as an organisation had an important political result. It had always been apostrophised as a '*bloc*' of communists, syndicalists and independent revolutionary trade unionists. But the course of events between the first and the second congress had brought about a division of the syndicalists into two currents: one that was influenced by anarchism and founded its own international organisation in competition with the RILU, and another that was communist-syndicalist in tendency.⁵⁹⁰ The latter group remained in the RILU and now worked closely together with the communist trade unionists. Its adherents themselves joined communist parties.

This was exemplified by what took place in France. Many prominent syndicalists of the *Vie ouvrière* tendency became party members. Monatte set the fashion for this when he joined the party in the spring of 1923.⁵⁹¹ Monmousseau did not follow him in formally becoming a communist party member until 1925 – by which time Monatte was already outside the party again – but in the intervening period he acted entirely along party lines within the CGTU, while many less prominent syndicalists joined the PCF in the first few months of 1923. It was not only the concession made at the second RILU congress that made this a possible path for them to follow. Changes in the leadership of the PCF itself were at least as important. The Comintern had taken steps at its fourth congress to ensure that the leadership of the PCF was taken over by the party left, around Souvarine, which was very close to the syndicalists. The change of leadership was finally completed at the beginning of 1923.⁵⁹² The CGTU formally

589 Figures were also given for municipal workers and textile workers (both 3.8 percent) and agricultural workers and woodworkers (both 2 percent).

590 This was Nin's analysis in Nin 1978, p. 123.

591 Wohl 1966, pp. 344 and 497. Trotsky commented on Monatte's action at the end of March in a lengthy polemic against the views of the French syndicalists: 'The entry of our friend Monatte into the party was a cause of great rejoicing: people of his calibre are essential for the revolution' (Trotsky, 'Une explication nécessaire avec les syndicalistes-communistes', in Trotsky 1967, pp. 261–8, here p. 261).

592 At the Paris congress of the PCF, held between 15–20 October 1922, the centre tendency in the party had won a narrow victory despite intensive efforts by the Comintern, which regarded the grouping as insufficiently revolutionary. In face of the growing risk of a

sealed its new relationship with the PCF at its Bourges congress, held between 12–17 November 1923.⁵⁹³ The majority resolution, supported by the *Vie ouvrière* group and the communist trade unionists, was directed against the anarchist and syndicalist endeavours to secure absolute autonomy for the trade unions which had had the support of a part of the CGTU leadership in the period immediately preceding the congress. While the independence of the trade unions was still underlined, the right of trade unionists to join political parties and to exert influence through them was also defended in the resolution. In the concrete situation of the time, this meant in plain terms that the PCF was given the right to form trade-union fractions ('*commissions syndicales*') within the CGTU. The resolution received overwhelming assent; and the new CGTU bureau, the top leadership body, which consisted of four people, was now entirely composed of adherents of the *Vie ouvrière* group. A small anarcho-syndicalist minority split away afterwards. An organisation called the CGTSR (*CGT Syndicaliste Révolutionnaire*) gradually emerged from this group. It joined the IWMA, but it would remain without influence in the future. It had no significant support, apart from in the building workers' union.⁵⁹⁴

split, the Fourth Comintern Congress in November 1922 compelled the centre to share power with the left, a step which in practice resulted in putting the latter in control (Wohl 1966, pp. 289–300). The party left then experienced its revolutionary baptism of fire in the course of actions against the French occupation of the Ruhr and in solidarity with the German revolution, which was considered to be about to take place (see Wohl 1966, pp. 313–43). For the revolutionary syndicalists, who were able to achieve close co-operation between the CGTU and the PCF in these activities, this was further proof that the PCF was a thoroughly revolutionary organisation which had nothing more in common with the 'politicking' engaged in by the left of prewar Social Democracy. For an attempt to place the *rapprochement* between some of the syndicalists and the communists and the division within syndicalism over the question within a more longterm perspective, see Kathryn E. Amdur, 'La tradition révolutionnaire entre syndicalisme et communisme dans la France de l'entre-deux-guerres', *Le mouvement social*, no. 139, April–June 1987, pp. 27–50.

593 See Wohl 1966, pp. 343–8. The majority resolution is printed, together with a detailed commentary, in *D'Amiens à Bourges. Documents*, Paris, 1923.

594 The trade unions which left the CGTU on this occasion first established what they called a *Union fédérative des syndicats autonomes* (1924). Two years later, this group formed the CGTSR, a step which was challenged by some other elements of the anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist spectrum. There is some information on the history of the CGTSR in Maitron 1975, vol. 2, pp. 65–72 and Claire Auzias, 'La CGTSR, 1926–1928: un épisode de décentralisation syndicale', *Le mouvement social*, no. 144, 1988, pp. 55–65. The conflicts in the CGTU were further sharpened by a tragic incident. A communist meeting against anarcho-syndicalism on 11 January 1924 led to an exchange of blows between the two

The entry of pro-communist syndicalists into the communist party took a similar course in other countries, except that here it was not the leading groups in trade unions that already belonged to the RILU who joined, but rather the spokesmen of minority tendencies in organisations which had turned against the RILU in the meantime. Among the Spaniards, for example, Nin entered the RCP (b) in 1923, because he spent all his time in Soviet Russia.⁵⁹⁵ But the main Spanish move to join the communist party did not come until the following year, after the third RILU congress in July 1924, which was attended by a five-strong delegation of the *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios* from Catalonia as well as some communist trade unionists from other parts of Spain.⁵⁹⁶ Since the communist party had had very few members in Catalonia until then (they came from the Socialist Youth), the syndicalists in practice took over the party in this part of Spain by joining it.⁵⁹⁷

This development, namely the entry of the current which sympathised with the RILU into the communist party, proceeded in a comparable manner in

sides. One of the stewards discharged his weapon. Two deaths resulted. The fury of the anarchists over this event is clear from the headlines in *Le Libertaire* for 12 and 13 January: 'The First Bolshevik Bullets are for the Workers' and 'The Horrible Bolshevik Crime' (see also the anarchist eyewitness report by May Piqueray 1979, pp. 122–5). Philippe Robrieux (1980, vol. 1) made a thorough investigation of the event, but was unable to discover the name of the person responsible for the deaths. He writes that the fatal shots came from the communist security service, but it remains unclear how far this was planned in advance and how far it resulted from an escalation in the level of conflict. (There is an earlier account in Wohl 1966, p. 531).

Lozovsky was forced to make a lightning visit to France to prevent further damage to the CGTU, possibly resulting in its collapse. (See the report he made to the Executive Bureau after his return at the beginning of February, RGASPI 534/3/75/116–19).

595 This information comes from the *Malaia entsyklopediia po mezhdunarodnomu profdvizheniiu*, Moscow, 1927, column 1296. Nin was himself one of the editors of this work.

596 Durgan 1996, pp. 32–4. As late as May 1923, Maurin was presenting the Bolshevik Revolution as the realisation of Sorel's ideas, a view which could hardly be harmonised with the communists' own conception of their revolution.

597 The retreat of the revolutionary movement since the 1920s was accelerated by the establishment of the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, which hit the CNT particularly hard. In the internal disputes of the CNT between the pro-Bolshevik revolutionary syndicalists, the pure syndicalists and the anarchists, the adherents of the RILU in Catalonia repeatedly tried to construct an alliance with moderate forces within the confederation against the anarchist supporters of a terrorist mode of struggle. They always failed, in view of the pressure the anarchists exerted, not least those outside Catalonia. (See Durgan 1996, pp. 31–2 and 35. See also Bar 1981, pp. 628–96, in general, for a discussion of the decline of the CNT as an organisation and the ideological debates within it).

other countries too.⁵⁹⁸ One of its consequences was that different tendencies ceased to be present within the RILU. From now on, its members were exclusively communists or at least sympathisers with communism. A question mark could certainly have been placed against the claim made when it was founded that it represented an alliance between different revolutionary tendencies, but now it was absolutely clear that it was a purely communist trade-union international. Its influence was therefore dependent from that point onwards on the influence of the communist parties and the Communist International. Although the resolutions passed by the second RILU congress were actually intended to emphasise its independent position, in a kind of ironic reversal they strengthened the tendency for the RILU to be forced into the role of a simple trade-union section of the Comintern, an apparatus for its trade-union work.

6 Excursus: Closer Organisational Connections with the Comintern: The RILU as Its International Trade-Union Apparatus

The change in the nature of the relationship between the two internationals which resulted from the resolutions of the second RILU congress found its organisational expression six months later at the next meeting of the Comintern leadership, the Third Enlarged ECCI Plenum (12–23 June 1923). Communists had now to act in the trade unions in accordance with the decisions of the RILU; they had to ‘make every effort to unite the trade unionists throughout the world under the banner of the Red International of Labour Unions’.⁵⁹⁹ Routine questions of trade-union work were thereby handed over to the RILU.

The removal of the ‘organic link’, in other words the abandonment of the practice of exchanging members of the leading bodies of both organisations, turned out to be a purely formal change, as Nin was to write ten years later.⁶⁰⁰ The independence and separateness of the two organisations, as expressed in the practice of equally valid and separate signatures to joint appeals, mani-

598 Lozovsky was already announcing this in the summer of 1923: ‘Many syndicalists have become communists, both in theory and in practice’ (‘Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. 25. Juni bis 2. Juli 1923’, Beilage zu: *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, July 1923, p. 19).

599 This is the wording of the resolution on the trade union question in *Protokoll der Konferenz der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale. Moskau 12–23. Juni 1923*, Hamburg, 1923, pp. 298–302, here p. 302. [Degras 1960, p. 35].

600 Nin 1978, p. 123.

festos and so on, was already observed before this as a theoretical principle. Immediately after the second RILU congress, an action committee was set up, consisting of representatives of both internationals. It was, however, a characteristic detail that the Executive Bureau, when it sat on 3 December, originally had in mind nothing more than a temporary 'action committee for the struggle against the offensive of capital'. The Comintern leadership pushed the RILU into making this a standing committee.⁶⁰¹

Hence at the end of December 1922, a committee was formed consisting of three representatives each from the Comintern and the RILU, and one from the Communist Youth International, and it soon started to go beyond simply discussing questions that jointly concerned the two internationals. There were many tactical and organisational problems relating to actual trade-union work in individual countries which had to be clarified to allow each communist party to adopt a consistent attitude. On some particularly important questions, there were even joint sessions of the leading organs of both internationals. The action committee set up in December met twenty times in the period up to the spring of 1924, in other words before the third RILU congress.⁶⁰²

In any case, the RILU did its best to defend the relationship established in this way between the two internationals against attempts by its own members to undermine it. Thus when, in July 1923, the trade unions of Alsace-Lorraine, who were imbued with the traditions of the German workers' movement but since 1919 had been a branch of the CGT, then the CGTU, resolved to exchange representatives with the top leadership of the regional organisation of the PCF, the Executive Bureau reversed this decision, referring explicitly to the position taken by the second RILU congress on the subject.⁶⁰³ The Executive Bureau also had to intervene in some countries to prevent factional struggles within the party (or the threat of factional struggles) from spreading to the trade-union organisations affiliated with the RILU.

601 RGASPI 534/3/24/12 and 42.

602 See the following reports: *Bericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale* 15. Dezember 1922–15. Mai 1923, Moscow, 1923, p. 13; *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress*, Hamburg, 1924, pp. 84–5; and *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 91–5. There are some sets of minutes of the action committee from the first months of 1923 in the RILU archive, but none from 1924 (RGASPI 534/3/50). The RILU's representatives on the committee varied. They included Lozovsky, Tresso, Nin and Enderle.

603 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 94 and 196. See also the corresponding material from the MEB (SAPMO I 6/3/45/1 and 13–16).

After the third RILU congress, which took place in July 1924, another action committee of the same kind was formed, although this one seems to have ceased its activities as early as the spring of 1925.⁶⁰⁴ It now started to become clearer that the Comintern was itself endeavouring to direct the work of the RILU without using an intermediary. On 3 December 1924, the presidium of the ECCI made a decision that any public declaration made by an 'associated organisation' of the Comintern (hence not just the RILU but others, such as the Communist Youth International) would have to be examined in advance either by it or by the ECCI secretariat. It reported its decision to the RILU purely for information.⁶⁰⁵

At the beginning of 1926, the joint RILU-Comintern action committee was replaced by a trade-union commission appointed by the sixth ECCI plenum. This did, however, include a number of leaders of the RILU (in the first instance Lozovsky and Nin, as well as Tomsky on behalf of the Russian trade unions).⁶⁰⁶ This new body, which replaced the previous arrangement under which the Comintern and the RILU had been formally equal, now embodied the latter's subordination. The tasks of the trade-union commission were determined by the new political reality, namely the 'course to the right' in the Soviet Union, which led on the international level to a 'policy of unity' (the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee), and also caused conflict in Moscow (between Lozovsky and Tomsky, for instance). The resulting problems made it necessary for the ECCI's trade-union commission to have a proper discussion, aimed at settling the conflict, since otherwise there was a danger that the policies of the RILU and the Comintern would diverge (on this see also chapter 7). The situation changed again, however, in July 1929, at the 10th ECCI plenum. This marked the victory of the new 'ultraleft' line, and therefore also the victory of Lozovsky

604 See its minutes (RGASPI 534/3/86) and chapter 6, section 3.

605 RGASPI 534/3/90/188.

606 The minutes of this commission are in the Comintern archive (RGASPI 495/51/1-26). Its formation and composition were reported in *Pravda* on 4 April 1926. See also the following explanation in the ECCI's official report: 'The work was further improved by the creation of a permanent trade-union commission, consisting of representatives of the most important parties and of the Profintern. The main task of the trade-union commission is to supervise the activities of communists in the trade unions and to check the advice and instructions to be sent to the parties about their work. The work of the trade-union commission will make a significant contribution to ensuring that the presidium can deal with trade union questions more regularly and more systematically' (*Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale. February/November 1926*, Hamburg-Berlin 1926, p. 10). The work of the trade-union commission is also discussed in chapter 7.

over Tomskey (which corresponded with Stalin's victory over the 'right' in the AUCP). The trade-union commission itself ceased to exist. It was typical of this commission that the RILU functionaries who belonged to it did not do so as representatives of their organisation, and they therefore had no independent standing. Moreover, they were always clearly in the minority. The decisions on communist trade-union policy that emerged from the commission therefore indubitably had the character of instructions issued to the RILU. The fact that the trade-union commission never had a public face⁶⁰⁷ underlines its function as a governing body.

In a similar fashion, the RILU leaders continued to belong to the Comintern leadership as well. It is true that the system of exchanging representatives between the two internationals had been abolished by the second RILU congress, and this decision was never rescinded in the subsequent period. At the Fifth Comintern Congress, however, Lozovsky returned to the ECCI, and after that he continued to be a member, even becoming a member of the presidium as well.⁶⁰⁸ Although he was elected as a member of the Soviet delegation, he was in fact the RILU's representative. After all, unlike the other Soviet delegates, he was not a member of the actual leadership of the AUCP (B), the Politbureau, despite the fact that he was elected to the CC as a candidate member at the end of 1927 by the Fifteenth Party Congress.⁶⁰⁹

607 For example, there was no word about it in the section on 'the RILU and the Comintern' in the Executive Bureau's report of 1928 to the fourth RILU congress. Instead, the report stated in a very general – and meaningless – way that the RILU was fighting side by side with the Comintern as an equal partner (*Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung in den Jahren 1924–1927. Bericht des Vollzugsbüros der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale an den 4. Kongreß, in Moskau am 15. März 1928*, Berlin, 1928, pp. 43–4).

608 The Fifth Comintern Congress in 1924 made him a candidate member of the ECCI, at the Sixth Congress in 1928 he became a member, then finally the Seventh Congress in 1935 demoted him to the status of candidate again (this was a sign of the lessening importance of the RILU). He had also belonged to the presidium of the ECCI, which was a much more important position, since 1926, first as a candidate, then, from the end of 1926, as a member. After the Seventh Congress in 1935, he was again a candidate. In addition to these positions, he was also from 1926 to 1935 a candidate member of the Political Secretariat of the ECCI. (This information comes from Vilém Kahan, 'The Communist International, 1919–43: the Personnel of its Highest Bodies', *International Review of Social History*, no. 21, 1976, pp. 151–85).

609 He was re-elected at subsequent party congresses, while at the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939 he even became a member of the CC, having been appointed assistant People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs in the meantime (Daniels 1960, pp. 429–32).

The movement did not happen in reverse, however. There was no official Comintern representative included in the RILU leadership, which in any case consisted exclusively of communists. All Comintern participation in the RILU leadership would have done would have been to present a misleading picture of equality between the two internationals, and there was no more need for this now that the syndicalists had been fully assimilated. Instead of this, a new level was introduced into the RILU hierarchy, which was directly controlled by the Comintern, in the context of the turn to an 'ultraleft' policy after 1928. When the Sixth Comintern Congress was changing its statutes, it decided to set up 'communist fractions' within the mass organisations associated with it.⁶¹⁰ These 'fractions', which were largely identical with the top leadership in each body, now met to discuss the fundamental lines of policy. They essentially duplicated the existing leaderships, since they had no public face. The 'communist fraction of the RILU' never spoke in public for the RILU. Although its existence

610 The Sixth World Congress inserted the following two paragraphs into the Comintern's statutes: '§6. In all non-party workers' and peasants' mass organisations (trade unions, cooperative societies, sports associations, ex-servicemen's organisations), and in their leading committees and at their conferences and congresses, as well as in municipal and parliamentary bodies and their committees, communist fractions must be formed, even if there are no more than two party members, for the purpose of consolidating the party's influence and carrying out its policy in these organisations and bodies. §7. The communist fractions are subordinate to the competent party bodies. Note 1: Communist fractions in international organisations (Red International of Labour Unions, International Class War Prisoners' Aid, International Workers' Relief, etc.) are subordinate to the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Note 2: The organisational structure of the communist fractions and the manner in which their work is conducted are determined by special instructions from the Executive Committee of the Communist International and from the central committees of its sections' (*Protokoll. Sechster Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Internationale. Moskau, 17. Juli–1. September 1928, Vierter Band, Hamburg-Berlin 1929*, p. 102) [*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh*, ed. B. Kun, Moscow, 1933, p. 47; Degras 1960, pp. 466–7]. The decision to form fractions in the leading bodies of the auxiliary organisations or mass organisations attached to the Comintern naturally had an element of absurdity, since all the members had the party book in any case, and could therefore already be expected to adopt the correct attitude. The Seventh Congress did not alter these rules, instead giving an instruction to the next congress, which never took place, of course, to undertake a general revision of the statutes ('Beschluss über die Änderung der Statuten der Kommunistischen Internationale', in *VII. Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Internationale. Resolutionen und Beschlüsse*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1935, p. 59). The dissolution of the RILU in 1936–7 made any further changes in its statutes superfluous, and in fact until the RILU's existence came to an end its 'communist fraction' continued to meet occasionally.

was not kept secret in principle, it did not, practically speaking, leave behind any public traces of its activity.⁶¹¹

Thus the external image was that of a hierarchy in which the trade-union international was a mass organisation directed by a political party. It was not without reason that Lozovsky stated in 1933 that the leading role of the Comintern in relation to the RILU 'can be more effectively implemented by the communist fraction than through a system of reciprocal representation laid down in the statutes', as had been the case when the RILU was founded.⁶¹²

The fact that the congresses of the two internationals, as well as the ECCI plenums and the sessions of the Central Council, were held at roughly the same time was also intended to make sure the RILU was under the direction of the Comintern. As a rule, this meant that the Comintern congress prescribed a new line, which the RILU then 'applied'. During the 'ultraleft turn', however, there was one exception to this rule, in which the RILU was used as a factional instrument. It anticipated the decisions of the Comintern in order to influence the opinion-forming process in the latter body.

Despite all the extenuating phraseology which appeared to point in a different direction, this organisational framework made the task of the RILU perfectly clear: it was to serve as the Comintern's 'trade union apparatus'. In the further course of events, however, it turned out that the RILU, once constituted as an organisation, developed a certain self-interest in preserving its own existence, and this could lead to tension and disputes with the Comintern.

611 The minutes of meetings of the communist fraction (*Komfraksiia*) of the RILU, which from 1930 onwards also had a Bureau, are preserved for the period from 1928 to 1935 in RGASPI 534/3/322-8, 410-19, 510-18, 629-37, 736-7, 970-4 and 1041-2. For the decision to make this structure public, in the framework of the approach to the Popular Front policy, see O. Pjatnitzki, *Probleme der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung. Bearbeitetes Stenogramm des Referats auf der Versammlung der Kommunisten in der RGI am 2. August 1934*, n.d., n.p. The communist fraction was also a feature of the congresses and Central Council sessions of the RILU.

612 A. Losowski, *Karl Marx und die Gewerkschaften*, Zürich, 1934, p. 168.

The United Front That Didn't Happen in 1923: The Role of the RILU

1 From the Hague Congress to the Ruhr Crisis: Fimmen Breaks Ranks

Only a few days after the second congress of the RILU came to an end, there was a quasi-official meeting between the communist trade-union movement and the leaders of the IFTU, at the Peace Congress organised by the IFTU at The Hague between 10–15 December 1922. This congress took place in circumstances dominated by the crisis over the Ruhr, which was to lead almost exactly a month later to its occupation by French and Belgian troops. But the Hague meeting was actually a result of decisions made by the IFTU congress held in Rome in April 1922. The London congress of the IFTU in November 1920 had already made the fight against war one of the organisation's tasks, to be conducted if necessary with the weapons of the strike and the boycott. In this way, the London congress had gone beyond the purely economic definition of trade-union tasks which had determined the IFTU's approach before the First World War. Fimmen made a particular effort to commit the IFTU to an anti-war course. A provisional committee with this aim had already been established at a meeting of the IFTU bureau with the representatives of the three most important ITSS (metalworking, transport and mining) on 15–16 November 1921. The Rome congress then made it a permanent fixture, while confirming the resolutions of the previous congress about war.¹

This was the background to the decision to summon a peace congress to meet at The Hague, so that representatives of the international trade-union movement could discuss together with social democrats and pacifist organisations what possibilities there were for safeguarding peace and what measures could be taken to preserve peace in case it was in danger.² The Comintern and the RILU were not invited, but an invitation did go out to the headquarters of

1 On the conference of November 1921, see 'Der I.G.B. und der Kampf gegen den Militarismus', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 6, December 1921, pp. 194–8. On the discussions in Rome and the resolution adopted there, see *Bericht über den internationalen Gewerkschaftskongress* 1923, pp. 66–84, 97–100 and 115–17.

2 On the decision to summon the congress, see *Presseberichte des IGB*, 24 November 1922, with a statement by Fimmen and a list of participants.

the Russian trade unions. They had already decided to participate before the RILU congress took place. Only Lozovsky, Radek and Theodore Rothstein were able to make the journey initially, as the other members of the large Soviet delegation originally chosen were prevented from travelling at first by a refusal to issue visas. All three were able to take part in all the proceedings of the congress. They had been delegated, formally speaking, by the VTsSPS, although only Lozovsky was a member of that body. Radek in practice represented the Comintern and Rothstein represented the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Although they were denied the opportunity to present alternative reports, they were able to present their views in contributions to the discussion. Their position, which was a controversial one as far as the other participants were concerned, guaranteed that their views would in a certain sense lie at the centre of the discussions. The rest of the Soviet delegation only arrived at The Hague when the congress was almost at an end, but they were able to have informal discussions with some of the ITS representatives.³

The congress confirmed the line taken at Rome, that the trade unions should prevent a new war by all means at their disposal. But distinct variations in approach were already perceptible. Fimmen, who gave the main report at the congress, under the motto 'War on War', remained true to his utterances at previous IFTU congresses, stressing the need for the workers' movement to take action by itself, independently. Other people, however, like Jouhaux and a number of Social Democratic speakers, placed their faith in the League of Nations, although they admitted that its response so far left much to be desired. The three Russian representatives protested against the failure to send official invitations to the Comintern and the RILU, and they also bemoaned the absence of representatives from the 'Near and Far East'. The immediate reply to this

3 On the course of the congress, see the minutes, printed as *Bericht über den internationalen Friedenskongreß. Abgehalten im Haag (Holland) vom 10.–15. Dezember 1922, unter den Auspizien des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes*, Amsterdam, 1923, as well as the two special issues of *Inprekorr* on the 'Peace Conference of the Amsterdamers', nos. 235, 13 December 1922 and 239, 18 December 1922. The composition of the Soviet delegation is given by A.I. Chechevishnikov, *Partiinoe rukovodstvo bor'boi sovetskikh profsoiuzov za edinstvo mezhdunarodnogo profsoiuznogo dvizheniia (1920–1923)*, Habilitation Dissertation, Moscow University, 1989, pp. 139–40. The work of the congress was summed up after its conclusion by both Lozovsky and Fimmen (A. Losowsky, 'Die Amsterdamer Internationale und der Kampf gegen den Krieg', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 1, January 1923, pp. 3–10; Edo Fimmen, 'Nach dem Weltfriedenskongreß', *Presseberichte des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbund*, 5 January 1923. See also Joachim Kuhles, 'Der Haager Friedenskongreß von 1922 – seine Ergebnisse und Folgen', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 2, 1978, pp. 236–47).

complaint was: we do have Georgia (a country into which the Red Army had marched the previous year), although the presence of Georgia hardly counter-balanced the absence of delegates from the European colonies. The Russians emphasised their interest in forming a united front, but they also objected strongly to co-operating with the numerous organisations of bourgeois pacifists that were represented, and to the intention expressed by some delegates of reforming the League of Nations. The reports and the resolutions based on them, the Russians said, were only general declarations of intent, and they therefore proposed, in view of the critical stage that the question of reparations was approaching, that the congress agree on a series of concrete actions, which would culminate in a general strike. It was impossible to reach agreement on any of the congress resolutions. The Russian delegation voted against all five (these covered: the tasks of the workers' movement in the struggle against war, the reform of the League of Nations, the threat of an occupation of the Ruhr, education for peace, and the tasks of the pacifist organisations).

After the end of the congress, the Comintern and the RILU sharply attacked it in a joint declaration. Amsterdam, they said, had dodged the issue of the united front and the class struggle against the war, and instead had made an alliance with bourgeois pacifism. When the next war happened, the IFTU and international Social Democracy would betray the working class as they had done in 1914.⁴ Fimmen's evaluation was entirely different, as was to be expected. The congress, he said, had torn the peace movement away from its powerlessness and demonstrated to the public that millions of people stood behind it. The action committee set up by the IFTU along with representatives of the ITSS already constituted the 'general staff of the war against war'. The communists might have refused to co-operate, but the hand of the IFTU remained outstretched. Fimmen did, however, stress the 'largely conciliatory tone' of the Russian representatives, even if they had only participated for propagandistic reasons.⁵ Fimmen's response was thus highly distinctive, and his views were not shared by his colleagues in the IFTU leadership or in international social democracy. This difference was not noted in any of the communist commentaries. These were all concerned simply to state that the congress had passed a programme which was radical in words, but it had avoided committing itself to any concrete action.

4 'Friede auf Erden. Die Amsterdamer werden Euch wieder wehrlos der Bestie des Krieges ausliefern', *Inprekorr*, no. 244, 28 December 1922, pp. 1842–3.

5 Edo Fimmen, 'Nach dem Weltfriedenskongreß', *Presseberichte des IGB*, 5 January 1923.

Something that happened on the fringe of the congress, but was not known to the public, was of far greater significance for the relationship between the two trade-union internationals than these statements. At the start of the congress, as Lozovsky later reported to the Executive Bureau, there had been indications 'that the Amsterdamers wanted to have an official discussion with the Russian delegation, but they finally decided not to engage in this discussion'. There was, however, a meeting at the ITS level, with Fimmen and Williams representing the ITF and Dißmann the IMF. Other delegations also announced their interest in future contacts with the Russian trade unions. Lozovsky came to the conclusion that 'a certain alteration in the views' of a section of the Amsterdamers was perceptible. This group was ready, he said, to abandon the old methods of fighting the Russian trade unions.⁶ These discussions with a number of ITSS would in fact soon bear fruit.

In the first instance, however, the international situation was entirely dominated by the increasing acuteness of the Ruhr crisis. After the failure of a final reparations conference, on 5 January, military occupation became unavoidable. On 6 and 7 January 1923, representatives of the Western European communist parties, the CGTU and the MVS (IAV) met together in Essen. They set up an international action committee and started the first protest actions.⁷ The IFTU for its part now had to show whether it was serious about its Hague congress decisions. It was already clear from its own internal discussions that there was very little possibility of putting them into effect.⁸ On 8–9 January 1923, the IFTU

6 RGASPI 534/3/46/53. On the discussions with the ITF, see also the comments of Robert Williams in his report 'Der Weltfriedenskongreß im Haag', *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 1, 1 January 1923.

7 Heinz Köller, *Kampfbündnis an der Seine, Ruhr und Spree. Der gemeinsame Kampf der KPF und KPD gegen die Ruhrbesetzung 1923*, Berlin-GDR, 1963, pp. 56–68; Angress 1963, p. 293; and Larry Peterson, *German Communism, Workers' Protest, and Labor Unions: The Politics of the United Front in Rhineland-Westphalia 1920–1924*, Dordrecht, 1993, pp. 161–2. Material on the Essen conference is preserved in SAPMO 12/3/187/1–16. We are unable to make any further reference to the international context of these events, which in any case lies outside our theme, for reasons of space.

8 The IFTU had a rapid series of meetings, while Fimmen engaged in a kind of shuttle diplomacy. See 'Au bureau de la F.S.I.', *Le Mouvement syndical belge*, no. 3, 3 February 1923; 'Der internationale Gewerkschaftsbund und die Benutzung des Ruhrgebiets', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, March–April 1923, pp. 68–71; Lothar Erdmann, *Die Gewerkschaften im Ruhrkampf*, Berlin, 1924, pp. 68–83; Hermann Salomon, *Der Abwehrkampf am Rhein und Ruhr. Eine Gewerkschaftsstudie unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Beschlüsse der internationalen und deutschen Arbeiterorganisationen*, Frankfurt am Main, 1924, pp. 23–30; and Michael Ruck, *Die Freien Gewerkschaften im Ruhrkampf 1923*, Cologne, 1986, pp. 103–23.

bureau met in Amsterdam. The representatives of each country explained why they were unable to organise a strike on the issue. Instead of that, the meeting placed its hopes entirely on preventing the occupation at the last minute by using the machinery of the League of Nations. Fimmen was also commissioned to meet with the ADGB in Berlin on 12 January to get a more precise idea of what it wanted the international trade-union movement to do. The invasion of the Ruhr, however, began on 11 January, and Fimmen was told by Leipart and other ADGB leaders that they would also have to hold off on a general strike in Germany for the moment. In view of the difficult situation, other countries should take the lead, and this also applied to boycotting actions. Fruitless discussions of a similar kind between trade-union leaders took place at the same time in Brussels and Paris, now with the participation of Mertens, the vice-chairman of the IFTU.

On 15–16 January, the action committee of the IFTU met in Amsterdam. Fimmen, along with Hodges, the secretary of the International Miners' Federation, pressed for a 24-hour strike to be organised by the ADGB. French, British and Belgian workers would then join in. Jouhaux managed to dilute this proposal considerably. On 17 January, the IFTU bureau confirmed this decision by the action committee, while building in an additional stumbling block by saying that it should be left to the League of Nations to deal with the occupation of the Ruhr. On 19 January, Fimmen came to Berlin for a further discussion with the ADGB leadership. In the meantime, however, the ADGB was in the process of joining a 'united national front' with the German government and business leaders, which involved the joint collection of charitable donations for the sufferers in the Ruhr and joint political support for passive resistance. But a split in the ADGB had also become evident. The trade-union sections led by former USPD leaders, above all the Berlin local association and the metalworkers' union under Dißmann, and also the AfA under Aufhäuser (which stood outside the ADGB), started to distance themselves from the course adopted by the ADGB executive.

On 23 January, representatives of the most influential members of the International Transport Workers' Federation, which was without doubt the most important branch of industry when international strike action was under consideration, had a meeting at which they promised to obey a strike call from

(on pp. 106–7 of this work, there is evidence about the doubts expressed within the IFTU as to the seriousness of the Hague resolutions). There is important source material on the attitude of the ADGB towards these international endeavours in Ruck (ed.) 1985, pp. 733–63.

the IFTU in any circumstances. Their voice was only an isolated one, however.⁹ On 26–27 January, after a meeting of the IFTU bureau the previous day, there was again an international discussion in Amsterdam, attended this time by the IFTU and the leaders of both the Second International and the ‘Two and a Half’ (Vienna) International. Even less came out of this meeting, however. It appealed for propaganda action (without obligation), it supported parliamentary interventions, and it called for the League of Nations to arrive at a peaceful settlement. The sole concrete result of all this hectic activity was the financial support which went to the German trade unions. One can only concur with Michael Ruck’s verdict on this ‘renewed bankruptcy of the international workers’ movement’: ‘Charitable payments and moral support without any real force behind it – this was the sole contribution the international workers’ movement made to supporting the German organisations in the Ruhr conflict’.¹⁰

In the meantime, the communists began to use the obvious unwillingness of the IFTU to put into effect its own resolutions as a propaganda weapon. ‘Hello, Fimmen and Vandervelde! What has happened to your international strike?’ asked Lozovsky in a widely publicised article published a few days after the Ruhr was occupied.¹¹ But what opportunities did the communists have to organise a united front? They had been trying to convert the factory councils into organs of the united front since 1922, when the situation in the country had begun to worsen with the rise in inflation that resulted from the payment of reparations.¹²

On the Ruhr, what was called the Committee of Twenty Three of the factory councils of Rhineland-Westphalia was set up by the KPD. It conducted

9 See on this the ‘Manifesto to the Transport Workers, Seamen and Railwaymen of all Countries’, printed in *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 3, 1 February 1923. There is also a report there on the refusal of Dutch dockers belonging to the ITF to load ships at Duisburg, which they regarded as strikebreaking. Ruck, however, writes of the manifesto: ‘There was no risk that this offer would be taken up’ (Ruck 1986, p. 120). Even so, there is no reason to doubt the readiness of Fimmen and all the other ITF leaders to do their utmost, in view of the international situation. This point applies even more strongly with regard to later developments, in other words the similar offers made by the ITF after 30 January 1933 and after Hitler’s march into the Rhineland, which were both rejected by the IFTU majority.

10 Ruck 1986, pp. 120 and 123.

11 *Inprekorr*, no. 16, 24 January 1923, p. 109. A few days later, Lozovsky himself gave the reply: ‘International strike? What do you take us for? (A Reply to the Moscow Barbarians). Freely adapted from Amsterdam by A. Losowsky’, *Inprekorr*, no. 25, 7 February 1923, pp. 187–8.

12 Peterson (1993) has described this in relation to the Ruhr district, while Heer-Kleinert (1983, pp. 187–97) provides a general survey of the KPD’s activities in the Factory Councils during 1922.

negotiations over the whole region, and took the initiative of calling an international conference, which was originally supposed to be held in British-occupied Cologne, but had to be transferred to Frankfurt when it was prohibited by the occupying power.¹³

The conference, which met from 17–21 March, was attended by a total of 243 delegates, although only 50 of these were not from Germany (10 of them were from France). In terms of political affiliation, it was overwhelmingly communist. 17 delegates belonged to the USPD (that is to say, the surviving remnant of the Right USPD after most of its members rejoined the SPD), nine to the SPD and two had no party affiliation. Lozovsky represented the RILU, and he also gave the main speech, after other speakers had given detailed reports on the situation in France, Germany and Britain. The title of this speech was 'The French Raid on the Ruhr and the Threat of War'. He sharply attacked the refusal of the IFTU to organise an international general strike, appealed for fraternisation between German and French workers, and called for the spreading of propaganda among the French soldiers. A united front would have to be established. Any trace of the nationalism of 1914 would constitute treachery. Clara Zetkin was the next speaker. She spoke on the danger of Fascism, making an attempt to analyse the nature of this novel phenomenon of a counter-revolutionary mass movement. The concrete results of the conference were: firstly, the passing of series of resolutions and manifestos; secondly, the election of an international Action Committee; and thirdly, the election of delegations which were meant to negotiate with international Social Democracy and the IFTU on the common struggle.¹⁴

After the conference ended, Lozovsky struck a balance of its results, contrasting it with the Hague congress. The Hague congress had failed to live up to any of its solemn promises, whereas the conference had made the united front a reality. He strongly stressed the presence of social-democratic groups. This showed that some of the social-democratic workers were no longer prepared to follow their leaders in joining hands with the bourgeoisie. Moreover, the Frankfurt conference had by no means asked them to accept the communist

13 The Executive Bureau of the RILU had already suggested calling an international conference at the end of February (RGASPI 534/3/44/171).

14 The main speeches and resolutions at the conference were printed as *Der internationale Kampf des Proletariats gegen Kriegsgefahr und Faschismus. Protokoll der Verhandlungen der internationalen Konferenz in Frankfurt am Main vom 17. bis 21. März 1923*, Berlin, 1923. See also Angress 1963, pp. 300–2 and Köller 1963, pp. 170–9. The conference materials are to be found in SAPMO I 2/3/187/17–113.

programme.¹⁵ A more realistic evaluation than Lozovsky's would have come to a more modest conclusion, however. At most, the Frankfurt conference *staked a claim* to a united front. The members of the SPD and the USPD who were there hardly represented a noteworthy current of opinion. When he spoke at the Executive Bureau, Lozovsky was already sounding somewhat more cautious, saying that the goal had been attained 'in part'.¹⁶ In fact neither the Second International nor the IFTU had seen any need to participate, and they had not even troubled to send a reply to the Committee of Twenty Three refusing its invitation. Only the secretary of the International Miners' Federation, Hodges, had replied. He too refused, on the grounds that the IFTU was not prepared to take part. There was also a remarkable incident connected with the conference, which once again showed what contradictions could emerge from the communists' united front endeavours. One of the USPD delegates was in fact a Left Socialist Revolutionary who had emigrated from Russia (this party was connected with the USPD through its membership of the 'Two and a Half' International) and he was initially elected to the conference presidium. Lozovsky made sure that his mandate was not accepted.¹⁷

The Frankfurt conference, therefore, was nothing but a communist assembly, at which the RILU demonstrated that it was ready to form a united front. This was a far cry from actually winning over broad social-democratic strata. The Action Committee tried for some time to broaden its basis with propaganda campaigns.¹⁸ Another thing the RILU tried to do was to get into contact with the IFTU.

In doing this, they had to take into account the fact that in the very first days of the Ruhr crisis the IFTU had made it absolutely clear, in a letter to Lozovsky signed by Fimmen, addressing him as 'the secretary of the so-called Red International of Trade Unions', that it wanted to have nothing to do with the RILU, an organisation which was continuously attacking it. It would not

15 A. Losowski, 'Sie und wir im Kampfe gegen den Krieg (Haag und Frankfurt)', *Kommunistische Internationale*, no. 26, 1923, pp. 5–26.

16 RGASPI 534/3/45/19. He had spent the whole of March in Western Europe. Apart from being in Germany, he also visited Czechoslovakia for discussions with the MVS, though he was deported after three days. See his letter to Beneš, 'Otkrytoe pis'mo gospodinu Beneshu', *Mezhdunarodnoe rabochee dvizhenie*, no. 9, 31 March 1923.

17 Typically enough, this incident is entirely unmentioned in the official minutes. Lozovsky himself, however, reported it in detail in his article on the conference (Losowski 1923, pp. 15–16).

18 See the section 'Die Durchführung der Frankfurter Beschlüsse' in *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 79–80.

even receive a reply unless it made an honest offer. This was the reply to two letters from the RILU calling for joint actions, against the threat of war arising from the Ruhr crisis and against Italian Fascism. The bureau of the IFTU had rejected these offers of a united front and commissioned Fimmen to give an appropriate answer. Fimmen himself formulated his reply in such a way as to leave open the possibility of getting in touch later under changed circumstances, and for him, as would soon appear, this was no mere rhetorical flourish. Even so, the practical result was the breaking off of a correspondence which had at least been conducted over the last one and a half years, admittedly without producing any results.¹⁹

On 3 May, a delegation from the Frankfurt Action Committee suddenly appeared in Amsterdam. It had had to enter the country illegally, and while doing so two of its members, the Russian representatives Iuzefovich and Kozelev (from the Metal Workers' Union), were arrested. The rest of the delegation, consisting of Heckert, Dudilieux (from the CGTU), Friege (an SPD member from the factory council movement in Rhineland-Westphalia) and Kalnin (another Soviet representative), managed to get to the headquarters of the IFTU and have a conversation with its secretaries Fimmen, Oudegeest, Brown and Sassenbach.

19 The various letters sent and received are printed in *Tätigkeitsbericht des IGB 1922–1923*, pp. 89–91. Fimmen had already sent a letter to Lozovsky on 3 January, answering a letter from the latter, rich in invectives, about the finances of the IFTU, including the demand that a third of the income be transferred to the RILU. Fimmen did not receive this letter until after the Hague congress. In his reply, he pointed out that they had just become personally acquainted at the Hague congress: 'Allow me, dear comrade, to say to you quite frankly that your letter disappointed me. I considered you to be more serious and more sensible than you have been pleased to present yourself in your letter'. After commenting on various assertions made by Lozovsky and indicating the deficiencies in his argument, Fimmen concluded: 'All I shall do here is make the following comments in rebuttal: 1 the ridiculous and senseless assertion in your letter that the IFTU receives money from the bourgeoisie cannot be upheld; 2 you are either not in a position, or you are unwilling, to declare openly and honestly, as I did, where your organisation gets its cash supplies and how they are employed. Everything else you write in your letter is a load of rubbish you yourself are far too sensible to believe. Permit me, dear comrade, to express for my part the respect you deserve' ('Die Finanzen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes und der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale', *Presseberichte des IGB*, 12 January 1923). After receiving this letter, the first response of the Executive Bureau of the RILU was to pass this resolution: 'In reply to the crude letter from Fimmen, we propose to ask the Amsterdam International to make clear to its secretary that 1 one should never lose one's composure, and 2 rudeness is no substitute for wit' (RGASPI 534/3/44/62). Later on, however, the Executive Bureau took pains to adopt a different tone in its two united front proposals.

They wanted to propose a common approach to the fight against the dangers of war and Fascism. The IFTU secretaries replied that they too wanted all workers to be united, but they were not competent to give an answer to the appeal itself. That would depend on the decision of the executive and the agreement of the national trade-union centres, and the Rome congress had decided to keep its distance from organisations that were working against the IFTU. When it was pointed out that this resolution about incompatibility would not apply to the Christian trade unions and in many countries would not even apply to the nationalist organisations, the delegation was asked to formulate an appropriate proposal to be put to the IFTU bureau. With this the decision on the matter was postponed for the present. The delegation had not secured any concrete results. In fact the IFTU secretaries had even tried to persuade the delegation to draw a veil of silence over the meeting, without success. Nevertheless, Amsterdam had been forced at least to receive the delegation. This was no doubt a reflection of Amsterdam's recognition that the Frankfurt conference had influential forces behind it, and that these could well get stronger as the situation evolved. Even so, this was a 'discussion between Moscow and Amsterdam' (as the IFTU's press report headed its announcement),²⁰ which only occurred because the IFTU had been taken unawares.

The events of the following weeks, however, entirely overshadowed the news of this meeting. In any case, a united front proposal never seems to have been made at this level subsequently.²¹ The meeting in Amsterdam did not result from any previous appointment, and it was entirely without consequences. This continued to be the case in the future. Where there were con-

20 'Eine Besprechung zwischen Moskau und Amsterdam', *Presseberichte des IGB*, 11 May 1923. See also 'Peregovory delegatsii Frankfurtskoi konferentsii s Amsterdamskim Internatsionalom profsoiuzov', *Mezhdunarodnoe rabochee dvizhenie*, no. 16, 19 May 1923, and the report in RGASPI 534/34/60/200-12.

21 There is no evidence of such a proposal either in the report of Executive Bureau of the RILU (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 79-80) or the report of the IFTU (*Tätigkeitsbericht des IGB 1922-1923*, p. 93), although they both contain brief references to the meeting. Indeed, the IFTU report has the following comment: 'Roughly a year has elapsed since this conference, and nothing has been heard from the so-called Action Committee. We would not claim that we had any high expectations of the proposal for practical measures, but it remains remarkable that after making such loud-mouthed propaganda for the fight against war, reaction and Fascism, the Action Committee failed to come forward with even the tiniest positive proposal'. The Executive Bureau of the RILU also clearly didn't attach much importance to the matter. At its 7 May 1923 sitting, it took note of a short and somewhat inaccurate report, and there was no further reference to it at its subsequent sittings (RGASPI 534/3/45/82).

tacts between the IFTU and the RILU in later years, these happened quite accidentally and they remained entirely informal. Concrete approaches to a united front developed not between the top international leaderships but at another level entirely.

The impulse to this came, surprisingly, from Fimmen, acting not in his capacity as IFTU secretary but in his other function as secretary of the ITF. For him, the collapse of all attempts made after 11 January to organise international action was also a personal blow, in view of the efforts he had made over the years, which had met with the approval of the IFTU at several congresses. One can admittedly ask why Fimmen did not pay any attention to the doubts previously expressed, or, perhaps better, why he was unwilling to do this. He was the person who had formulated the anti-war position of the IFTU most strikingly. Indeed, he had used it as a kind of watchword in the fight against the communists. Now his colleagues had left him high and dry, and he had lost all credibility. What he found particularly revolting was the attitude of the ADGB, or rather of the majority of the ADGB executive, which preferred to form a united front with the German business leaders in their 'Ruhr aid' project.²²

He published a blunt summary of the current situation at the beginning of February in the ITF's newssheet, heading it 'Black January'. Nationalism had penetrated deeply into the working class, he said. The attitude of its leaders was simply a reflection of this. Yet at conferences they had repeatedly affirmed their support for internationalism and the war on war.

It is the leaders who have defended and proclaimed fine and elevated ideas, ideals and principles with fine and elevated language. They are the ones who have made solemn oaths and undertaken the duty of imbuing the workers with these ideas, ideals and principles. And they are the ones who, at least in this respect, have failed to fulfil their obligations. Anyone who stands at the head of a workers' organisation, whether large or small, and who believes that my words are untrue, and that they have done all they could to educate the workers who have entrusted them with leadership, and to make them into internationally thinking and internationally acting fighters, should stand up and say so. The leaders of the movement have not done their duty! Far from it!²³

22 Fimmen had already clashed violently with the ADGB in the autumn of 1922, when it raised doubts about the seriousness of the IFTU's attempts to secure a revision of the Versailles reparations payments (see Ruck 1985, pp. 632–3, footnote).

23 'Schwarzer Januar', *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 3, 1 February 1923.

This devastating verdict, which ended in a dramatic appeal to try everything possible to change the course of destiny, was a bombshell for the IFTU. At first his colleagues in the executive regarded it as a provocation. An example of their response was a long official statement by Mertens, who was the chairman of the Belgian trade unions and the vice-chairman of the IFTU. No one, he wrote, could be so naive as to think it was easy to put into effect the resolutions passed in Rome and The Hague. All the same, in Belgium they had done what was possible. And if others had done the same, there would have been no need for these lamentations. But Fimmen was cradling himself in illusions and putting forward plans that were completely unrealisable. He should have done his duty, which was not to publish such things.²⁴ Three months later, Mertens let the cat out of the bag, publicly announcing what he had only implied before: Fimmen had originally intended his 'epistle' to be published in the *Presseberichte des IGB*, but had withdrawn it after fierce objections from his colleagues.²⁵ His critics had evidently not taken into account that he had another publishing outlet, which he immediately made use of. They probably felt this was particularly provocative.

The very first reaction came from his colleague in the secretariat, Oudegeest. He replied immediately after the article had been reprinted in a Dutch social-democratic newspaper, on 6 February. In a personal letter, sent the very same day, he accused Fimmen of failing to observe an agreed compromise. This compromise had been arrived at with difficulty after Fimmen had presented his ideas in an interview and Oudegeest had replied to them. With his 'Black January' article, he had insulted all his colleagues in the various countries concerned, discredited the IFTU's bureau, and exposed the international to the attacks of its enemies. He had not acted as a true comrade. As a secretary of the IFTU, he was in no position to attack the IFTU secretariat.²⁶ Oudegeest also sent a letter to all members of the IFTU executive complaining that Fimmen had published his article without agreeing it with his colleagues in advance.²⁷ He finally attacked Fimmen publicly, in the Dutch social-democratic press.²⁸

24 Corn. Mertens, 'Janvier terrible!', *Le Mouvement syndical belge*, no. 5, 3 March 1923.

25 Corn. Mertens, 'Explications nécessaires', *Le Mouvement syndical belge*, no. 12, 9 June 1923.

26 There is an English translation of this letter in a dossier on Fimmen handed to the TUC in reply to a critical comment by the General Council after Fimmen's resignation from the IFTU secretariat (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3).

27 According to the ADGB chairman Leipart, speaking at a meeting of the ADGB Federal Commission on 17–18 April 1923 (see Ruck 1985, p. 811).

28 As reported in 'Die Krise bei den Amsterdamern', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 8, 3 March 1923.

Fimmen now went onto the offensive. Already when he spoke to the CGT congress on 31 January he had made no secret of his opinion. He raised the spectre of the war danger and bitterly declared that the workers' movement 'is not capable of resisting'.²⁹ It was, however, his speeches in Germany in the second week of February that demonstrated how his attitude had been radicalised. He was able to build on the support of a developing opposition within the ADGB leadership, which consisted of a group of former USPD trade unionists led by Dißmann. The latter organised a series of meetings with Fimmen in many places, including Hamburg, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Leipzig, Dresden, Breslau and Berlin. Only the united front and the class struggle, Fimmen proclaimed at these meetings, could prevent the outbreak of a new war. This was what Amsterdam stood for. If this had not happened, it was a result not of 'betrayal' but of the excessive influence of nationalism on the workers. Moscow too must recognise that fact, and Moscow too, it had turned out, was unable to prevent the troops from marching into the Ruhr. They should therefore strive to create mutual confidence instead of mounting attacks on each other. 'The moment when Amsterdam and Moscow stand shoulder to shoulder in a genuine struggle will be the greatest moment the workers' movement has experienced, and it is only from that moment that the real, revolutionary advance of the workers will be able to start'.³⁰

The Federal Committee of the ADGB held a meeting at which it agreed to send a formal protest to the IFTU about Fimmen, despite the opposition of Dißmann and Simon. Fimmen, it was said, had organised his propaganda trip behind the back of the ADGB executive, and he had even criticised the latter. The draft of the protest was admittedly softened by the removal from it of the formal request to the IFTU executive that it restrain its secretary (Fimmen) from making 'impermissible interventions into the internal affairs of

29 *Compte-rendu sténographique des séances du XXIII^e Congrès National Corporatif (XVII^e de la CGT). Tenu à Paris du 30 Janvier au 2 Février 1923*, Villeneuve-St. Georges 1923, pp. 52–4. See the communist commentary on this, in which notice is not yet taken of the drastic change in Fimmen's attitude: A. Lißkow, 'Edo Fimmen und die Arbeiterklasse', *Inprekorr*, no. 20, 14 February 1923, p. 219.

30 Edo Fimmen, *Die Weltlage und die Aufgaben des internationalen Proletariats*, Berlin, 1923, p. 27. This is the text of his speech in Hamburg, which was published by the communists, with the accompaniment of a critical commentary. His speeches in the other cities were similar. A general view of the background and course of Fimmen's journey around Germany can be gleaned from the sharp debates in the ADGB Federal Committee printed by Ruck (1985, pp. 768–90), as well as an article in the ADGB's press organ ('Der IGB und die Lage in Deutschland', *Korrespondenzblatt*, no. 8, 24 March 1923, pp. 83–6).

particular national organisations' in future.³¹ Even so, the scandal was now out in the open.

The bureau of the IFTU examined this protest by the ADGB when it met on 11–12 March 1923. The IFTU's official report is completely silent on this point³² but in actual fact Fimmen was strongly attacked at the sitting. The chairman of the IFTU, Thomas, was particularly vehement in his criticism, so that for a while the question of Fimmen's resignation was in the air. He finally agreed to make a declaration that he would refrain from making any speeches as IFTU secretary if that was the wish of the national centre in question, but that he reserved the right to continue speaking as an individual and as an ITF secretary.³³ Leipart, who reported on this a month later at a sitting of the ADGB Federal Committee, remarked critically that Fimmen had not changed his position, and his attitude appeared in the meantime in a still more unfavourable light.³⁴ Oudegeest, who now increasingly replaced his colleague, who had been so voluble up till then, in the job of representing the IFTU to the outside world, published an extensive justification of the IFTU's position.³⁵

For the ADGB, however, this did not go far enough. It expressed its sharp disapproval of Fimmen at a sitting of its Federal Committee on 17–18 April. It declared that it would expect the IFTU executive to prevent the recurrence of such events.³⁶ The ADGB's statement was presented to the IFTU executive on 27–28 April. All that happened, however, was that after another appeal to Fimmen to behave loyally towards his colleagues, the whole matter was postponed to the next sitting of the executive.³⁷

31 Ruck 1985, p. 778.

32 Printed in *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, March–April 1923, pp. 67–8.

33 This information is derived from a chronology of the 'Fimmen affair' and an 'Extract from the Minutes of the Bureau Meeting on March 11th and 12th, 1923' contained in the TUC dossier (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3).

34 Ruck 1985, p. 811. The Belgian IFTU leader Mertens wrote that, after a long debate, Fimmen had given his word that he would not publish any more articles which might impose any responsibilities on the IFTU, unless this was previously agreed with his colleagues in the secretariat (Corn. Mertens, 'Explications nécessaires', *Le Mouvement syndical belge*, no. 12, 9 June 1923).

35 J. Oudegeest, 'Die Besetzung des Ruhrgebiets', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, March–April 1923, pp. 57–66 and *Tätigkeitsbericht des IGB 1922–1923*, p. 63.

36 Ruck 1985, pp. 811–15.

37 The information again comes from the TUC dossier on the Fimmen affair (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3). Nothing was published in the IFTU organ about this sitting.

2 The Attempt to Achieve the United Front through the International Trade Secretariats

Some years after 1923, Monatte, who had been Fimmen's opponent at the Lille congress of the CGT in July 1923, asked him what had happened to turn the 'Fimmen of 1921' into the 'Fimmen of 1923–1926'.³⁸ We have already given some explanation for this, but one further element needs to be mentioned. He had been authorised at the IFTU bureau sitting of March to travel to Warsaw to get more precise information in view of reports that were emerging 'about the possibility that a war is about to break out between Poland and Russia'.³⁹ His journey provoked strong communist protests. The Polish socialists would inevitably come out in support of the ruling regime in Poland and its plan to go to war with Russia. Fimmen's visit would only serve the cause of pacifist hypocrisy. The anonymous author of this attack nevertheless had to admit that he had very little concrete information on Fimmen's activities in Poland.⁴⁰

He did in fact gain information there which strengthened his fear of an impending attack on Russia, as he told Monatte three years later.⁴¹ On his return he made sure that the General Council of the ITF issued a manifesto to all transport workers, at a sitting held on 22–23 March. The manifesto spoke of the threat of a surprise attack on Soviet Russia. Relying for support on the IFTU's declaration of 1921 appealing for famine relief to be provided to Russia, the ITF went on to warn of the danger that Western powers would use this war to impose a counter-revolutionary government on Russia. This would be a tremendous reverse for the international workers' movement as a whole.⁴²

Fimmen also took a personal initiative. In March, he secretly approached the Soviet ambassador in Berlin, Krestinsky, to inform him about what he had

38 P.M. 'Une heure avec Fimmen', *La révolution prolétarienne*, no. 22, October 1926, p. 10. Monatte asked Fimmen whether he changed his views mainly because of the Ruhr crisis, as he himself once wrote in 1923 (in the preface to a booklet which contained several of his articles and speeches, *Vers le front unique internationale*, Brussels, 1923). Fimmen replied that it was his experiences on his journey to Poland which had made the greatest impression on him.

39 'Bürositzung des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, March–April 1923, pp. 67–8.

40 'Die Amsterdamer und der Ruhrkrieg. Edo Fimmens Reise nach Warschau', *Inprekorr*, no. 60, 6 April 1923, p. 481.

41 P.M. 'Une heure avec Fimmen', *La révolution prolétarienne*, no. 22, October 1926. Fimmen did not tell Monatte what he actually found out in Poland.

42 The report and the manifesto are printed in *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 7, 1 April 1923.

seen in Poland. Krestinsky reported this to Moscow, where they initially did not want to believe the warning, but then changed their minds and decided it had a sound basis, as Krestinsky told Fimmen. The latter then sent him the text of the manifesto of the ITF General Council.⁴³ Thus there began an exchange of views with representatives of the Bolshevik leadership, including correspondence with Radek during June, then with Zinoviev in autumn in connection with an invitation to Moscow. This finally culminated in a trip to Moscow the year after.⁴⁴

In the meantime, however, the 'informal contact' made at the Hague congress with the Russian transport workers' unions by the ITF to explore their possible affiliation⁴⁵ had had some results. Fimmen continued the contacts with an exchange of letters with the Russian transport workers' unions and face-to-face meetings with Russian trade-union representatives in the MEB during his various stays in Berlin.⁴⁶ He made it clear from the outset that the ITF only wanted to meet with the Russian trade unions, thus excluding any direct participation by other RILU organisations. The communists finally gave way on that point. The contacts he made, and the change in his whole attitude, had the result that the MEB and the KPD decided not to attack him any longer, although for years he had practically personified Amsterdam in communist propaganda publications.⁴⁷

At the beginning of April, Fimmen reached an agreement with a Russian member of the MEB on the manner in which they could organise a joint conference. First the Russians would request this officially, relying on the manifesto issued by the General Council of the ITF. Then he would approach all members of the ITF executive and propose that they agree to the suggestion. If they did so, the conference would take place at the beginning of May in Berlin. The Russians would meet with him and Williams on the eve of the conference and

43 There is only one more letter from Fimmen to Krestinsky (dated 10 April 1923) in the RILU archive (RGASPI 534/5/158/22–3). In it he mentions his previous letter of March, but without referring to its content, which would after all have been known to Krestinsky anyway.

44 Except where reference is made to different sources, the following discussion is based on my article 'Unity between "Amsterdam" and "Moscow"? Edo Fimmen's relationship to the Communist Trade Union Movement', in Reinalda (ed.) 1997, pp. 94–105.

45 See section 1 of this chapter and Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 68.

46 There is no trace of this correspondence in the ITF archive, but it is there in the RILU documents (for example, RGASPI 534/5/158, 1, 4 and 15). See also G. Atschkanow, *Kurze Geschichte der internationalen Bewegung der Transportarbeiter*, Berlin, 1927, pp. 19–20.

47 Chechevishnikov 1989, pp. 163–4.

discuss the agenda in advance 'so that the conference will run smoothly'.⁴⁸ One can see from this that the conference that took place at the end of May was overwhelmingly the result of Fimmen's personal initiative, and that he did not hesitate to engineer it by negotiating directly with the Russians. Very few members of the ITF leadership were aware of this. The impression was given to the outside world, and this remained the common view, that the initiative for the conference had come from the Russians alone.⁴⁹

The aim of the conference was to establish a working partnership between the ITF and the Russians, and Fimmen provided a detailed draft of the way this could be organised. He envisaged the formation of a joint action committee, which would set in motion a broad set of campaigns, starting with the distribution of leaflets and ranging from strikes, which would bring transport to a standstill, to the formation of proletarian defence organisations against Fascism. This first meeting in May would then be followed some time later by a bigger international conference.⁵⁰

On 25 April, Fimmen met the Russian representatives again in Berlin, and he was able to inform them that in the meantime most of the members of the IFT General Council, including the two German members, had agreed to the Russian proposal.⁵¹ When the delegation from the Frankfurt Action Committee

48 This comes from a letter of 10 April to Lysskow, in which he confirmed the agreement he had reached with him (RGASPI 534/5/158/19).

49 This is how it was put in the ITF report for the years 1922 and 1923, presumably drawn up by Fimmen: 'A manifesto issued by the General Council of the ITF provided the opportunity for this conference ... In connection with this manifesto the Russian trade unions asked to have a joint discussion for the purpose of securing joint action in the struggle against war and reaction' (*Geschäfts- und Kassenbericht über die Jahre 1922 und 1923*, Amsterdam, 1924, p. 34). Probably not without reason, there are absolutely no documents on this matter in the ITF archive, although it does contain a considerable quantity of Fimmen's personal correspondence.

50 RGASPI 534/5/158/29–31. The Executive Bureau of the RILU 'took note' of this on 24 April (RGASPI 534/3/45/57).

51 Chechevishnikov 1989, p. 165. The effect of this, Fimmen said, would be like throwing a bomb into the Hamburg congress of frauds and impostors. He was referring to the congress which took place in Hamburg between 21–25 May to found the Labour and Socialist International as the result of a merger between the Second International and the Vienna International. The IFTU was represented there by Brown and Oudegeest. The latter also sent a message of greetings to the congress. The explicit criteria for invitations to the congress included a commitment to the unity of the trade-union movement within the Amsterdam International and an acceptance of the decisions of the Hague congress. It was at this point that the IFTU abandoned its officially proclaimed independence of poli-

met the secretaries of the IFTU at the beginning of May, Fimmen urgently appealed to the Russians to make sure that their trade unions avoided using any incautious formulations when they wrote letters to ITSS asking to be admitted. He called on them to take to heart Lenin's advice that they should use tricks and subterfuges to become members of trade unions.⁵²

In view of the rapidity of this development, the RILU was almost too late in altering its line of approach. Would the conference really produce a united front, or was it merely one more step in a campaign of agitation? This was the question Tomsy noted down during a discussion of the directives for the conference. The RILU decided to try to achieve the greatest possible publicity, in order to isolate Amsterdam. The main purpose would be to create an action committee with equal representation for both sides. Equality would be preserved between Amsterdam and the Russian trade unions and the other revolutionary transport workers' organisations would also be included.⁵³

After Fimmen had repeated his position in a much-publicised speech on 15 May at a congress of railway workers in Prague, saying that the day when Moscow and Amsterdam joined together would be the day of the proletariat's worldwide triumph,⁵⁴ the two delegations had a meeting in Berlin on 23 and 24 May.⁵⁵ The ITF was represented by Fimmen, Williams, the ITF's second secretary Nathan Nathans, the chairman of the French railway union Marcel

tics. From now on it entertained direct relations with the Labour and Socialist International, taking part, for example in regular joint sittings of both leaderships (*Tätigkeitsbericht des IGB 1922–1923*, p. 104; J. Oudegeest, 'Der Sozialistenkongreß in Hamburg', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 4–5, July–October 1923, pp. 185–91; and *Protokoll des Internationalen Sozialistischen Arbeiterkongresses in Hamburg, 21. bis 25. Mai 1923*, Berlin, 1923, pp. 5 and 11–13). The Comintern and the RILU made an appeal to this congress for a united front and sent a delegation to achieve it. It was led by the Polish communist Walecki. Lozovsky, Rosmer, Andreev, Heckert and Tom Bell were the other members. Their request to be heard by the congress was rejected, however (Rosmer 1971, pp. 200–1).

52 Chechevishnikov 1989, p. 165.

53 Chechevishnikov 1989, pp. 166–7. This discussion took place at a meeting of the bureau of the communist fraction of the VTsSPS. The Executive Bureau of the RILU did not discuss the directives. These were presumably examined rather in the joint action committee of the Comintern and the RILU, owing to their importance. There is, however, no trace in the RILU archive of any minutes of this body's meetings at this period.

54 Fimmen 1923, pp. 27–8.

55 The RILU archive has detailed Russian minutes of the meeting and a highly compressed English account of it as well (RGASPI 534/5/159). The ITF archive has nothing in any language. The resolutions which were passed were published in *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 11–12, 15 June 1923, and in *Internationales Transportarbeiter-Bulletin*, no. 2, 26 July 1923.

Bidegaray, and the chairman of the German Transport Workers' Union Johann Döring. On the Russian side, the delegation consisted of representatives of the three transport and communications workers' unions (Andreev, Sadovsky and Achkanov) and Lozovsky, who represented the VTsSPS. When the members of the Russian delegation signed the conference documents, they added that they had been given 'full powers' to do this 'by all transport workers' unions attached to the RILU'.

According to the official statement, the conference was conducted under the watchword of 'joint comradely work and a conscious will to secure the unity in action of all transport workers'. The main subjects of the discussions were the war danger, the impact of Fascism and the repercussions of this for the transport workers' unions. The possibility of achieving a reunification of the divided organisations was also discussed, but the ITF representatives were ready to accept the Russian transport workers' unions, and no others, as interlocutors. The conference agreed to adopt two manifestos, one against war and the other against Fascism. It also agreed to set up an international action committee to organise the common struggle. A world congress of all transport workers was to be called in order to put in hand 'the establishment of a unified national and international organisation'. All these concrete decisions, however, were still subject to the reservation that the participating organisations must give their agreement. This referred to the ITF, first and foremost.

The conference participants were keen to present a picture of unity to the outside world, and they issued a *communiqué* indicating their entire agreement. Nevertheless, even though the majority of the delegates on both sides of the fence wanted to achieve unity of action, differences of opinion did in fact surface, and they arose within the ITF delegation itself. Bidegaray repeatedly criticised the views of the Russian representatives, stressing the ITF's connection with the Amsterdam international, and the results that followed from that, and he insisted on the fulfilment of certain prerequisites for the united front which were aimed at reducing communist influence. He was supported by Döring, but the two of them were unable to win a majority for their proposals.

It thus became clear that opinions in the ITF were divided over the results of this conference. At the end of May, the German transport unions announced that they rejected the conference resolutions, giving the reason that these matters should be decided by the IFTU. Bidegaray did the same.⁵⁶ There was

⁵⁶ Both statements can be found in RGASPI 534/5/159. A similar description of the situation, based on internal information, is given in a letter from the MEB dated 7 June (RGASPI

an angry clash between the supporters of the two positions at a sitting of the supreme policy-making body of the ITF, the General Council, on 17–18 June.⁵⁷ Williams emphasised that the conference was an attempt to do something. Other organisations simply passed resolutions, he said, but the ITF had always tried to take action. Bidegaray and the Germans, on the other hand, vehemently criticised the decisions of the conference. They warned that if the ITF accepted them it was placing itself in opposition to the IFTU. But other members of the General Council disagreed. They said it was in the interests of the ITF to establish a united front, at least with the Russians. The declared opponents of the Berlin conference resolutions replied by pointing to the existence of the RILU, an organisation that wanted to split the IFTU. The Russian trade unions, they said, were still affiliated to it. In order to avoid an open split in the General Council, the members finally agreed on a position which at least in appearance did not involve a direct confrontation with either of the tendencies represented there. On the one hand, the decisions arrived at in Berlin would not be put into effect for the moment; but on the other hand, the General Council declared that it was in principle ready to establish a united front with the RILU or with a part of it (this meant it had decided not to try to divide the Russian trade unions from the RILU) and it called on the IFTU take appropriate steps in this direction. It expressed regret over the difference of opinion that had arisen between itself and the IFTU, but it suggested that the latter should examine whether the first step to the establishment of complete unity might not be to bring about unity in particular ITSS. The General Council also called on the RILU to end its fight against the IFTU and its organisations.

Despite its attempt to avoid antagonising anyone by devising these adroit formulations, the General Council could not hide the fact that it had rejected the Berlin conference resolutions. Fimmen had to defend himself in an emotional speech against rumours that were circulating about him.⁵⁸ He and Williams both offered to place their positions at the Council's disposal, since they

534/4/50/257). The IFTU publicised a critical statement which had been made by Bidegaray in an organ of the CGT (*Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 23, 5 June 1923).

57 The minutes of this General Council sitting are in the ITF archive (MRC MSS 159/1/2/4); Fimmen's speech is missing from this document, however. There is a copy of it in the RILU archive (RGASPI 534/5/158/57–73). Fimmen had given it to Münzenberg, and he in turn sent it on to Moscow (RGASPI 534/5/158/76). The resolutions that were passed are printed in *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 13–14, 15 July 1923, along with a commentary by Fimmen.

58 It was alleged that he was being manipulated by others. Sometimes the Second Secretary of the ITF, Nathans, was named, sometimes his secretary, 'Eduard Weckerle, a former member of the USPD', and finally 'a woman' also entered the picture.

bore the main responsibility within the ITF for the calling of the Berlin conference. Their colleagues on the General Council did not want to take things as far as that, however, and they said they still had confidence in the two of them. They were at least not prevented from continuing to press for the establishment of a united front. Fimmen announced this straight away in a commentary on the meeting, although any activity of this kind would 'self-evidently' have to comply with the decisions of the General Council.

The ITF's decisions were also affected by tactical moves made by the communists, which took place at exactly the wrong moment as far as the advocates of the united front were concerned. After the Berlin conference, the Russians had had a meeting with communist transport workers' representatives from other countries, at which they decided to begin straight away with a broad campaign for the implementation of the Berlin resolutions, since they would doubtless be boycotted by the right-wing Amsterdamers.⁵⁹ Moreover, Lozovsky had written a pamphlet just after the conference in which he also examined the differences of opinion that had surfaced.⁶⁰ Fimmen, who found out about this by accident, managed to prevent the pamphlet from being distributed in Germany. Its contents became known in France, however. This was a breach of the confidentiality that had been agreed at the conference. Then there was a series of further revelations in newspapers dealing with disputed formulations in the agreed text of the resolutions, resulting from translations into different languages and differences between the original draft and the final version. An apparent failure by the conference to make clear what should be published and what should not was also a contributory factor. Finally, individual communist trade unions, in France for example, immediately started to call on their ITF colleagues to establish a united front with them. All these activities by the communist side contributed to worsening the mood at the sitting of the General Council.⁶¹

Before the ITF sitting took place, Fimmen protested directly against Lozovsky's action (which he called 'indescribably clumsy') in a letter to Radek, who happened to be in Berlin during the conference and with whom Fimmen had

59 Andreev mentioned this in his report to the central committee of the railway workers' union, printed in *Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia transportnikov v Berlina 23-24 maia 1923g.*, Moscow, 1923, pp. 27-34, here p. 33.

60 A. Losowski, *Die Einheitsfront der Transportarbeiter*, Berlin, 1923.

61 This information is taken in part from the correspondence between Döring and Fimmen. Fimmen wrote to Döring immediately after the communists started publishing their revelations (MRC MSS 159/1/2/5 and RGASPI 534/5/158/39-41). It is also taken in part from Fimmen's letter to Radek referred to in the next footnote.

also had a meeting at that time. He had spoken about this to Heckert and Willi Münzenberg, he said, and they had agreed with him, and he asked Radek to inform Zinoviev of his opinion as well. A lengthy correspondence between Fimmen and Radek ensued, in which Radek stated that he and Zinoviev both agreed with him. This time-consuming exchange of letters, however, could not remedy the damage that had been done, as the ITF had already made its decision in the meantime.⁶² In any case, the activities of the communists made it more difficult for the advocates of a united front to make progress within the ITF. They could be used by its opponents as proof that they were not serious about the united front and were only interested in splitting the transport workers' secretariat.

What was most important, however, was that now the IFTU started actively to take issue with the behaviour of its secretary. When the delegation from the Frankfurt Action Committee had its discussion with the secretaries of the IFTU on 3 May, Kalnin thought he could deduce from Oudegeest's comments that the IFTU bureau accepted the idea of the Berlin conference. According to Kalnin, the English representative on the secretariat, Brown, had declared in a private conversation with the delegation after the meeting that he was in solidarity with Fimmen.⁶³ There was in fact English support for Fimmen, and this was to be of great significance in the subsequent period, but Kalnin's overall evaluation was not accurate. When the IFTU bureau met, it sharply attacked not just Fimmen but the whole of the ITF for its actions. The bureau disclaimed all responsibility for the Berlin conference, which had been held without its knowledge. The IFTU made its decisions at congresses, it said, and the bureau was also bound by those decisions and they could not simply be changed by other bodies. The London congress had already invited the Russians to affiliate. Otherwise, unity could only be established within the framework of the regular organisations of each country. Fimmen abstained from voting on this resolution, which was accepted by all the other members of the bureau.⁶⁴

62 MRC MSS 159/6/2 and RGASPI 534/5/258/52–6 and 74–6.

63 RGASPI 534/4/50/210–11.

64 *Die Internationale Gewerkschafts-Bewegung*, no. 4–5, July–October 1923, pp. 8–9. The information on the votes cast in the bureau, which is not given in the above periodical, has been taken from 'Extract minutes Bureau Meeting May 30th and 31st, 1923', MRC MSS 292/915.5/3. A letter from the MEB to Moscow also contains the following information about the course of the bureau sitting which was marked 'not for publication': 'The bureau sitting was extremely stormy. Leipart, Mertens and Oudegeest wanted to disavow Fimmen officially. Jouhaux acted as a moderating force. The resolution ... was formulated by

As we have seen, when the General Council of the ITF met three weeks later it did not explicitly reject the Berlin resolutions, although it did not confirm the agreement for a united front either. The IFTU bureau responded some days later (on 22 or 23 June) by reaffirming its earlier decision and presenting the whole matter to the IFTU Executive, which was scheduled to meet at the beginning of August. Fimmen again abstained from voting. The bureau meeting also had before it a telegram sent by the VTsSPS on 11 June, in which the latter organisation protested against the bureau's decision at the end of May to disavow the Berlin conference resolutions, but also picked up on its remark about the Russian trade unions. They had always supported the united front, the VTsSPS said. The IFTU had opposed a concrete proposal for the united front, but it had then made a conciliatory gesture to the Russian trade unions. They therefore proposed an early meeting for the purpose of clarification. The bureau did no more than take note of this telegram at its 22–23 June meeting. It decided to postpone the decision on an answer until the IFTU Executive met.⁶⁵ Oudegeest informed the Russian trade unions of the postponement on 2 July, and he also wanted to know from them whether they had really sent the telegram in their own name or in the name of the RILU.⁶⁶ The VTsSPS replied by complaining that all their endeavours to secure a united front were being frustrated. The initiative for the foundation of the RILU had come from the Russian trade unions, and they were part of it. The VTsSPS had approached Amsterdam because it was seeking to mount a common struggle against the offensive of capital and Fascism, irrespective of the immense differences of opinion between the two sides. These differences would also exist if the Russian trade unions were affiliated to the IFTU and not the RILU. The real question was: is the IFTU prepared to engage in a joint struggle or not? The VTsSPS understood that the IFTU was not happy with the RILU, but it should still reply

Jouhaux. The bureau wanted to oust Fimmen by inducing him to give up his post as secretary of the ITF and devote himself entirely to the IFTU. Fimmen refused point-blank to do this. On the contrary, he offered to resign from his post as IFTU secretary so as to be able to devote himself entirely to the ITF. The bureau refused to accept Fimmen's resignation, however, because they were worried that this would sharpen the disagreements between the ITF and the IFTU' (RGASPI 534/4/50/257).

65 *Die Internationale Gewerkschafts-Bewegung*, no. 4–5, July–October 1923, pp. 10–11, and 'Extract Minutes Bureau Meeting June 22nd and 23rd, 1923', MRC MSS 292/915.5/3. Here too, the IFTU organ did not give any indication of the way the voting had gone. See also *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 237.

66 *Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR 1922–1924 gg. Otchet VTsSPS k VI s'ezdu professional'nykh soiuзов*, Moscow, 1924, pp. 4–5.

to this telegram and if it agreed it should immediately propose the time and place for a conference.⁶⁷

The RILU was very optimistic at first about the Berlin resolutions. They seemed to mark a breakthrough. That was the tenor of a report made by Lozovsky at the Executive Bureau's sitting of 4 June, in which he gave a detailed account of the course of the Berlin conference. Although a number of concrete proposals had not been accepted – above all the proposal to form national committees and to move towards reuniting the trade unions which had split – they had still been able to agree on a concrete programme of action. Indeed, it was Lozovsky's opinion that the relationship of forces in the ITF was now at a stage where, if the Right refused to make any concessions on the question of ratifying the conference resolutions, there would be a split in the whole organisation.⁶⁸ But the decision of the German transport workers' unions to oppose the resolutions became known on the very next day. Lozovsky was able to overcome the opposition of Enderle and Andreev in the Executive Bureau, persuading it to proceed cautiously for the moment and to avoid giving the opponents of the Berlin conference an excuse to work against it. They should wait until the General Council of the ITF had made its decision, he said. It was agreed on all sides, in any case, that other Russian trade unions should in their turn attempt to bring about similar conferences to the Berlin one. The atmosphere was still one of optimistic expectation.⁶⁹

When the communist fraction of the VTsSPS met shortly afterwards, it was confronted with the news of the IFTU bureau's decision at the end of May, which had just arrived in Russia. The 11 June telegram to the IFTU, mentioned above, with its proposal for a conference, was drawn up at this meeting of the communist fraction, although there were differences over tactics. Lozovsky proposed a joint letter by the VTsSPS and the RILU, but Tomskey was able to push through his view that the telegram should be sent in the name of the Russian trade unions alone, 'so as not to provoke the reformists'.⁷⁰ This was an early sign of a difference in approach which would lead within a year to fundamental disagreements between the two Bolshevik leaders.

The Central Committee of the railwaymen's union, which was one of the three Russian transport unions that participated in the Berlin conference, met on 7 June. Its proceedings were dominated by the positive outlook presented

67 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 238.

68 RGASPI 534/3/45/130–2, and 'Doklad tov. Lozovskogo', in *Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia* 1923, pp. 22–7.

69 RGASPI 534/3/45/139–41.

70 Chechevishnikov 1989, p. 174.

by Andreev in his detailed report. The idea emerged of inviting the leadership of the ITF to Russia, in particular Fimmen and Williams (the latter had already visited the country once before), so that they might familiarise themselves with the activities of the Russian transport workers' movement.⁷¹

The hopes that still rested on the ITF, despite everything, were abruptly shattered when the General Council's decision of 17–18 June became known. This happened in the middle of the discussions of the third session of the Central Council of the RILU, which took place between 25 June and 2 July. Right at the start, in his report on behalf of the Executive Bureau, Lozovsky had portrayed the Berlin conference as the dawn of the united front. Its opponents in Amsterdam would, he said, undoubtedly suffer a severe defeat.⁷² His disappointment was all the greater when he found out about the result of the ITF General Council's meeting. He made a special declaration in which he pointed out the ambiguity of the General Council's resolution. For him, this expressed the fact that the ITF was divided into two groups, each roughly equal in strength. But the result of all this was clear: 'the agreement reached at Berlin has been nullified'. The united front of transport workers had been broken up. There was nothing left for the Central Council to do but call for a campaign of international protest and propaganda.⁷³

The Berlin transport workers' conference was not the only attempt to establish a united front made at this time, though it was the most far-reaching, and it therefore aroused the greatest international attention. The Russians also had a meeting with the International Metalworkers' Federation. After Russian representatives had spoken with Ilg in Stockholm in September 1922, and then at the beginning of December the Central Committee of the IMF had declared its readiness in principle to have a meeting with the VSRM, discussions had been conducted with the Russians by Dißmann during the Hague conference. Ilg was then invited to Moscow. Since it was impossible for him to make the journey, and a meeting at the headquarters of the IMF in Berne was ruled out by the likelihood that the Swiss would refuse to issue visas, they finally decided to meet in Friedrichshafen.⁷⁴

71 The report and the resolution are printed in *Mezhdunarodnaia konferentsiia* 1923, pp. 27–35.

72 *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 25. Juni bis 2. Juli 1923 1923, pp. 6–7. (Supplement to *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, July 1923).

73 Lozovsky's declaration and the Central Council's manifesto are printed in *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates* 1923, pp. 67–8 and 87.

74 Golub and Shilovich 1978, pp. 30–1, and Chechevishnikov 1989, pp. 176–7.

The conference met there on 18 May, in other words five days before the international transport workers' conference.⁷⁵ The participants were, for the IMF, Ilg, Dißmann and the DMV's second chairman Reichel, and for the VSRM Vaksov and Shvernik, accompanied by Jacob Walcher (who unofficially represented the metalworkers' IPC). After Ilg had once again raised the question of the RILU, it was above all Dißmann who tried hardest to smooth the path for the Russians to be admitted into the metalworkers' ITS. The representatives of the VSRM, in line with their instructions, emphatically underlined their organisation's desire to become a member. They also wanted to help restore unity to the divided organisations. An agreement was finally arrived at, signed by all the participants,⁷⁶ which envisaged a kind of provisional membership for the Russian metalworkers, subject to acceptance by the next sitting of the IMF Central Committee. Until they had definitively been accepted by the next IMF congress – and the members of the IMF who participated in the Friedrichshafen conference clearly assumed that this would happen – the Russians would take part in the leading bodies of the IMF (the Central Committee and the Executive Commission) in a consultative capacity. For their part, they promised to co-operate 'in a comradely fashion' and to contribute to overcoming the splits that had arisen.

Some days later, on 27 May, the third conference of the metalworkers' IPC met in Berlin. As was to be expected, it approved the Friedrichshafen resolutions.⁷⁷ There was, however, a certain amount of criticism, since the issue to be presented to the IMF had been reduced to the question of Russian membership alone. What was just as important was the organisation of the struggle. The IPC therefore called on the IMF to hold a new conference on the model of the international meeting of transport workers that had just taken place. An international action committee of metalworkers, consisting of representatives of the

75 The minutes of the conference and a list of the agreed points are printed in *VSRM i International Metallistov (Dokumenty)*, Moscow, 1923, pp. 3–14. There is a short survey, with the agreed points, in *Berichte des Sekretärs und der Landesorganisationen 1921–1924 an den x. internationalen Metallarbeiter-Kongreß in Wien*, Berne, 1924, pp. 11–12. The instructions given by the VSRM to its representatives are in *Otchet TsK VSRM* 1923, pp. 278–80.

76 The Russian version contains Walcher's signature, but this is absent from the version printed in the report on the IMF's activities. The original document of the Friedrichshafen agreement (FES IMB 2361, document 19b) contains all the signatures, but after Walcher's signature there is the handwritten comment: 'Do not add this name'.

77 There is a short report, including the resolutions, in *Internationales Metallarbeiter-Bulletin*, no. 2, June 1923. The minutes are preserved in RGASPI 534/5/44/55–81 and 132–87 and in FES IMB 2361, document 20. The IMF, which somehow obtained a copy of these records, published extracts from them in *Berichte des Sekretärs* 1924, pp. 18–24.

IMF and the metalworkers' IPC must be organised. Just as was the case with the IMF, only for opposite reasons, the metalworkers' IPC was extremely concerned about the issue of the independent revolutionary metalworkers, particularly in France and Czechoslovakia. Walcher in particular warned against the split that had come about in Czechoslovakia. Both Walcher and the Russians emphasised that if the IMF was making concessions over the issue of the admission of the VSRM, the revolutionary metalworkers in other countries must also make concessions in order to re-establish unity.

The congress of Russian metalworkers met in the middle of June. Like the metalworkers' IPC, it expected the Friedrichshafen decisions to be implemented soon, and it tried to add to them the demand for an international conference and an action committee.⁷⁸ But Ilg had already replied to the metalworkers' IPC, immediately after its conference, by telegram, that any attempt to go beyond the Friedrichshafen decisions would be rejected.⁷⁹

At its sitting at the beginning of June, the executive of the IMF recommended acceptance of the Friedrichshafen decisions to the Central Committee of the IMF which was due to meet in Berne at the end of August.⁸⁰ When the Central Committee met, however, the Friedrichshafen agreement came under attack, after some organisations had written to say that they would vote against the admission of the Russians.⁸¹ Several representatives recalled the sharp disagreements of the past and referred to the continuing existence of the RILU. Dißmann countered this argument by saying that the split at the 'highest' level could only be overcome by building bridges at the level of the individual Trade Secretariats. Ilg added that once the Russian trade unions started to belong to their respective ITSS, the probable result would be the dissolution of the RILU. It was finally agreed that the Friedrichshafen agreement should be accepted in principle, but the IMF secretariat would be commissioned to clarify 'the disputed points', by which they meant the doubts there were over the readiness of the VSRM to implement the resolutions 'loyally', before the congress. The Central Committee emphatically rejected the application for membership of the CGTU metal workers' trade union, because there was already a CGT metal

78 *Vsesoiuznyi soiuz rabochikh metallistov v rezoliutsiiakh i postanovleniiakh s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK*, vol. 1, 1907–25, part 2, Moscow, 1928, pp. 128–9.

79 The telegram is printed in *VSRM i Internatsional Metallistov (Dokumenty)*, Moscow, 1923, p. 16.

80 *Berichte des Sekretärs* 1924, pp. 12–13. The minutes of the Central Committee sitting are preserved in FES IMB 2146 (a).

81 The letters came from the Belgians and the Czechs, among others. They are to be found in the IMF correspondence from the year 1923, in FES IMB 2144.

workers' federation. In contrast, in the case of the application by the Bulgarian communist trade union, it was unclear whether the official Bulgarian member organisation of the IMF still existed. If it did not exist, the vote on the admission of the Russian unions would determine the IMF's attitude.

The result of the Central Committee's deliberations was thus somewhat limited. It was also overshadowed by the fact that no Soviet representative was present. Before it met, the VSRM had asked for a change of *venue*, because Switzerland was being boycotted by Soviet Russia owing to the assassination of a Soviet diplomat there. This request arrived at such short notice, however, that it was impossible to comply with it.⁸²

It was clear that the IMF, or more precisely Ilg, was not in much of a hurry, as the next congress, which was to decide on the Russian application for admission, had been set for the middle of 1924. Ilg therefore did not initially inform the Russians about the result of the Central Committee sitting. He assumed, as he wrote in his report to the next IMF congress, that the information had already reached Moscow through other channels. In the middle of October, however, Vaksov complained about the absence of any kind of official information, and a plenum of the VSRM's Central Committee once again confirmed the Russian wish to be admitted to the IMF. It also asked for the IFTU to support the admission of the Russian metalworkers. Developments in Germany now occupied the central position in everyone's thoughts, as this was the time of preparation for a communist uprising. The whole of the Russians' attention was given to the hoped-for 'German October', so Ilg's non-committal reply, which was received at the end of that month, initially evoked no response.⁸³ Not until

82 For the correspondence on this, see RGASPI 534/5/48.

83 *Berichte des Sekretärs* 1924, p. 13; Vaksov 1924, pp. 81–3; and *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov v revoliutsiiax i postanovleniiax s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov CK*, vol. 1, 1907–25, part 2, 1928, pp. 167–8. The attitude taken by Ilg casts retrospective doubt on the seriousness of his endeavours to put into effect the resolutions voted at Friedrichshafen. At the end of August, Dißmann had pointed out to him that distorted accounts had been published in the press about the results of the Central Committee sitting, and this had already led to protests in communist newspapers. 'We don't need to get excited about that', he replied. 'You will soon be able to tell the All-Russian Metal Workers' Union what happened and suggest setting a date for a new joint meeting'. In fact when Ilg was asked about his personal attitude by another DMV functionary (Fritz Kummer, a long-established member of the executive, who was made editor of the DMV organ in 1921 as a concession to the right wing of the SPD), he said this: 'I assure you that I am just as mistrustful of the Russians now as I ever was ... I completely disagree with the united front propagated by Fimmen and I would energetically oppose such an agreement' (FES IMB 2144). Moreover, when the IMF had held a Balkan conference in the autumn of 1923,

the spring of 1924 would contact again be taken up, in preparation for the IMF congress.

The communists' united front offensive was still less successful in the other International Trade Secretariats (though there was one exception, as we shall

Ilg had kept all the unions regarded as communist out of the meetings, despite their applications for membership (Vaksov 1924, pp. 62 and 65). Dißmann on the other hand, despite the sharp political differences that separated them, tried to sound out Walcher from mid-September onwards as to whether there could be co-operation between the KPD metalworkers and his supporters (that is to say, members of the right wing of the former USPD) against the right wing of the SPD (and therefore also against the leadership of the ADGB). One aspect of the background to this was Dißmann's strong opposition to trade-union participation in the official Ruhr Aid [*Ruhrhilfe*] campaign. The other was the impending DMV congress. The election of delegates in July, which had been marked by a fierce fight between the various political parties for support, demonstrated according to Dißmann's estimate that the KPD controlled roughly 40 percent of the votes, although the system of election being practised meant that this did not produce the same percentage of delegates (Letter to Ilg, 27 July 1923, in FES IMB 2144. See also Wentzel 1981, p. 175, who has an even higher estimate for the KPD's voting support of almost 50 percent). Dißmann then proposed an actual alliance to the KPD, despite their previous confrontation, in view of his sharp conflict with the SPD Right. This would no doubt have led to a revolutionary change in relations between the various currents of the German workers' movement. The KPD's politbureau agreed to this despite being very sceptical about the chances of achieving it. It was agreed to exchange draft platforms. Then two obstacles appeared. For one thing, the DMV congress had to be repeatedly postponed owing to the trade union's lack of funds. (It would eventually take place at the end of February 1924, which was far beyond the deadline set by the statutes). The other obstacle was the fact that the KPD was now entirely preoccupied with the preparations for the 'German October'. After its failure, Walcher spent the period from December to the end of January in Moscow, where the Comintern was examining the reasons for the defeat, and was therefore unable to take any further action on the matter of Dißmann's proposals. Moreover, the balance of forces within the KPD itself changed after the defeat. Walcher was the most important trade-union specialist of the Brandler-Thalheimer *Zentrale*, which was oriented towards the united front, but he was now removed from the KPD leadership. The new leadership was strongly influenced by 'ultra-left' tendencies on the trade-union question. Although Dißmann tried to the end to arrive at an agreement with the KPD fraction in the union, the party leadership rejected his offers. Any alliance, they said, would only be possible on the basis of the communist programme. Walcher sent an angry letter accusing the KPD leadership of playing into the hands of the ADGB and the SPD party executive with this 'senseless resolution'. The Executive Bureau of the RILU, it is true, was aware of Dißmann's offer, but it did not engage in any discussion of the DMV congress before it met because of the much more 'significant' prospect of a German revolution, or at least of a communist takeover of the whole German trade-union movement. It

see later). The British chairman of the International Federation of General Factory Workers, James O'Grady, visited Russia in the spring of 1922 and he held out the prospect of an early affiliation by the Russian union of factory workers. When the Federation held its congress in Vienna in the middle of July 1923 (O'Grady himself was unable to come, since, for financial reasons, the British sent no delegates at all),⁸⁴ it was in fact attended by two Russian represent-

only discussed the DMV congress afterwards. Lozovsky had already proposed a minimum programme to the new KPD leadership which could be used as the basis for an offer to Dißmann, but this too was rejected for the same reasons of principle as in the previous case. He complained afterwards to the Comintern leadership about the KPD's decision to make alliances with left Social Democrats only after they had accepted the communist programme. Ruth Fischer described this as 'the 21 conditions', while Lozovsky saw it as sheer foolishness. According to communist data, the opposition at the DMV congress had the support of 140 out of 400 delegates. 70 to 90 of the social-democratic delegates belonged to the left wing. An alliance between the KPD and the left SPD would thus have produced a majority. Instead of this, the social democrats closed ranks, and the congress was the scene of a fierce confrontation between the social-democratic and communist delegates. The right-wing social democrats had tried to overthrow Dißmann before the congress, but in this new situation they abandoned the attempt. At the Fifth Comintern Congress, in July 1924, Radek again drew attention to what had happened: 'The decision of the German *Zentrale* that we were not allowed to try to take over the leadership at the metalworkers' congress, together with the left section of that congress, was a fateful error. (Much laughter and shouting from the German delegation). Yes, yes! If you had formed the coalition in the metal workers' union which the representative of the RILU demanded, the strongest of all the German unions would not have been in a position – whether Dißmann is a scoundrel or not – to engage in this practice of brutally expelling communists as cynically as it is doing. You would have been able to defend yourselves'. This comment brought a sharp reply from Ruth Fischer, who argued that, because of the prohibition of the KPD then in force, it was necessary to step forth 'independently, as communists' (Jakob Walcher, 'Unsere Gewerkschaftsarbeit von Beginn bis 1924', unpublished manuscript, pp. 296–300 [SAPMO NY 4087/5]; letter of 12 October 1923 from Vaksov to Moscow [RGASPI 534/5/46/31–3]; 'Ein Beschluß und ein Brief aus dem Jahre 1924 (Vor dem DMV-Verbandstag in Kassel)', in *Gegen den Strom*, no. 33, 16 August 1930, pp. 507–8; Wentzel 1981, pp. 175–6; RGASPI 534/3/77/51–2 and 534/3/90/16; minutes of the trade union section and report by Melcher on the DMV congress [SAPMO 12/708/10]; August Enderle, 'Der Kongreß des Deutschen Metallarbeiterverbandes', *Inprekorr*, no. 34, 14 March 1927; and *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 1, pp. 185 and 205).

84 Writing in the *Daily Herald* of 26 June 1923, O'Grady again explicitly reaffirmed his previous comments about Russia and the need to establish a united front. He also declared his support for the International Transport Workers' Federation and the joint conference they had held with the Russians. (His statement was reproduced in *Rotes Gewerkschafts-Bulletin*, no. 29, 7 July 1923).

atives. But the Federation's Executive Committee only allowed them observer status. When they asked to speak to deliver their greetings to the congress, the request was initially rejected, on the basis of the Executive Committee's decision. The question of the union's admission to the Federation was then discussed at length, since the Norwegian Union of Factory Workers had tabled a proposal to that effect. The opposing view was put by the secretary of the Federation, Stenhuis. He stressed the differences of opinion on matters of principle which had divided them from Russians ever since their first meeting with them at the end of 1920. As long as the Russian trade union remained a member of the RILU, its admission to the Federation was impossible, he said. In any case, all negotiations over a united front fell within the jurisdiction of the IFTU. This position prevailed against the single vote cast by the Norwegian delegation. Nevertheless, the Russians were at least given the opportunity of informing the delegates about the situation in the Russian chemical industry and the role of their trade union, when the country-by-country reports were given.⁸⁵

The International Federation of Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers (IFBSOLW), led by Simon, was strongly sympathetic to the line put forward by Fimmen and Dißmann. The chairman of the Russian leather workers' union, Iuzefovich, met Simon in the middle of April, having previously spoken at a leather workers' meeting in Berlin, which unanimously called for the admission of the Russians to the Federation. The report of the MEB on Iuzefovich's meeting with Simon explicitly emphasised the change of tone, and the result of this 'friendly' discussion was an invitation to the Russians to attend the next congress. Simon said he was 'a strong supporter of a *rapprochement* between Amsterdam and Moscow', but despite all his sympathy for the Russians he did not think the leather workers could 'break the overall discipline of Amsterdam and independently take the first step in this direction'.⁸⁶ When the Central Committee of the Federation met on 6 June 1923, therefore, it rejected the Russian request for admission, unless there was a prior agreement between Amsterdam and Moscow.

85 See *Protokoll des Kongresses der Internationalen Vereinigung der Fabrikarbeiter-Verbände. Abgehalten from 16. bis 18. Juli 1923 zu Wien*, n.d., n.p. Fimmen represented the IFTU at this congress. In his welcoming speech, he made the following appeal: 'If we want to resist threats and fight effectively against the dangers that face us ... we need the whole working class and the whole workers' movement to be powerful and united. We therefore need Amsterdam and Moscow to come together. Both sides will have to make sacrifices to bring about the unity that is necessary'.

86 RGASPI 534/4/50/144-5. See also the discussion of the meeting in the Executive Bureau (RGASPI 534/3/45/57).

A strong movement of protest against this decision arose in several constituent organisations of the IFBSOLW. They demanded the immediate admission of the Russians. The matter was dealt with at its second congress, which was held in Dresden in mid-September 1923. Iuzefovich was again admitted as a guest, and he was also allowed to give a short statement at the appropriate point of the agenda. After a stormy discussion and with many contrary votes, it was agreed to reject the application conditionally rather than out of hand. The congress set a number of requirements such as the cessation of 'cell-building' activities, disaffiliation from organisations which did not belong to the IFTU, and abandonment of the struggle against Amsterdam, which made the admission of the Russians impossible for the moment.⁸⁷ Nothing remained for the Russian leather workers' union to do but to issue an international protest and place its hopes on the next congress (which did not meet until 1925).⁸⁸

Only one ITS broke through the front of rejection and continued the process of admitting the Russians which had already been set in motion. This was the International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades (IUF). Its Executive sat on 22–23 April and discussed the situation that had arisen after the Russian congress of food and drink workers had made its call for the strengthening of the International Propaganda Committee and for revolutionary activity within the IUF. Only members of the Executive were present, along with Fimmen, as the representative of the IFTU. Many of them expressed the view that if they had known about the Russians' call for revolutionary activity, they would have refused to advocate their admission. Some raised the spectre of a split in the IUF if the Russians were admitted. The union's secretary, Schifferstein, tried to take up a middle position, saying that the Russians' membership of the RILU did not exclude them from the IUF in principle, but any propaganda against Amsterdam would rule them out. This last point was vague enough to make it easy to reject any specific request for admission. The only member of the Executive who stuck to the original decision to admit the Russians without making conditions was the communist Josef Ormianer. Fimmen then outlined the decision made by the IFTU at its Rome congress, that the admission of organisations affiliated to the RILU to ITSS must be rejected, although he added that this decision was only of 'moral significance' since in formal terms the ITSS were independent organisations.

87 *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des 2. Kongresses der Internationalen Vereinigung der Schuh- und Lederindustriearbeiter. Abgehalten in Dresden am 16. 17. und 18. September 1923*, n.d., n.p., pp. 4–5, 7, 9–10 and 25–37.

88 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros 1924*, p. 144.

The fact that the Russians stood outside the IFTU was their own fault, and to be admitted to ITs they would first have to change their fundamental position. He himself, however, was unconditionally in favour of unity, and he therefore proposed something which the ITF was also considering, and for which it wanted to hold a meeting with the Russians in a month's time: the establishment of a working group. The IUF Executive went on to adopt this position as well, thereby disavowing its earlier decision to accept the Russians. The working group would make the joint conduct of activities possible and thereby create the conditions for future unification, it added.⁸⁹

The presidium of the Russian Food Workers' Union protested sharply against this decision, which contradicted all the IUF's previous decisions. It pointed out that not all members of the IUF were also in the IFTU. The Norwegian organisations were internationally independent, for example, and the Americans stood to the right of the IFTU. The IUF Executive, far from making a united front, was creating a split. Moreover, there was no possibility of misunderstanding the resolution of the congress of the Russian union on the food workers' IPC. It described its purpose as to contribute to the unification of all workers in the food industry.⁹⁰ The IUF leadership issued a statement protesting against this accusation of splitting. Unity, it said, required a common basis. This could hardly exist if accusations of treason were being made.

There were now three different proposals on the table for the IUF to accept: admission of the Russians, rejection of their application, or the establishment of a working group.⁹¹ The day before the IUF congress began, however, a meeting of the Executive was held at which it made a surprising retreat. It decided to withdraw the proposal for a working group and recommend instead the admission of the Russians. But a number of conditions were attached to the

89 The minutes of this meeting are in *Mitteilungsblatt der IUL*, no. 4, end of April 1923. Fimmen's failure to reject any kind of relationship with the Russians in a plain and open fashion was not taken kindly by his IFTU colleagues. At the sitting of the IFTU Executive held on 3–4 August, Jouhaux said that Fimmen had claimed on his return from the IUF sitting that he had prevented the admission of the Russians. 'Later on', he added, 'it turned out that Fimmen's report on this meeting was incomplete, because it became known that he had introduced counter-proposals to the above decision' ('Extract Minutes Management Committee Meeting August 3rd & 4th 1923', pp. 1–2 [MRC MSS 292/915.5/3]).

90 'Aufruf des Russischen Verbandes der Ernährungsarbeiter an die Arbeiter der Nahrungsmittelindustrie aller Länder', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5–6, May–June 1923, pp. 556–7; also printed in *Mitteilungsblatt der IUL*, no. 5–6, end of June 1923.

91 The three proposals were published in *Mitteilungsblatt der IUL*, no. 7, middle of August 1923.

recommendation. One of these conditions was that fractional work, in the shape of the IPCs and the propaganda activities associated with them, must cease. Immediately before this, in fact, the RILU had brought out the first issue of *Der Rote Lebensmittelarbeiter*, including material about the forthcoming congress, although it did not appear as the organ of the IPC, which in any case was not especially active, but only as a 'special edition of the *Rotes Gewerkschafts-Bulletin* for the international food workers' movement'.⁹²

The IUF congress took place in Brussels from 30 September to 2 October 1923.⁹³ After Schifferstein had explained the new attitude of the Executive on the admission of the Russians, Krol' immediately announced that the Russian food and drink workers wanted there to be a single, unified organisation, and proclaimed their firm determination to accept the statutes, although he indulged in tortuous formulations when it came to the concrete questions at issue. The Dutch food workers' union objected to the admission of the Russians, and was supported in this by the leader of the CGT food workers. Then a vote was held on the two alternatives placed before the congress by the Executive. The Russians were admitted to membership of the organisation by 22 votes to 20. The application of the Bulgarian food workers (of the communist trade-union confederation) was accepted as well, but the application of the CGTU food workers was rejected. The majority allowed no discussion of this last point. They evidently wanted to avoid raising the question of their attitude to the (anti-communist) split among the food workers in France, which had occurred before the CGT itself had split. This might have caused problems.

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- 92 There are no minutes preserved of this meeting of the IUF Executive. Nor did Schifferstein give any reason why it had changed its opinion when he announced the resolution to the congress. After the discussion, the Executive invited two Russian delegates to enter and the decision was read out to them. The Russians replied that they wanted to join the IUF but they could not accept any prior conditions as they were only trade-union representatives and therefore were not the right people to speak to about communist fraction work. Moreover, they could not proceed against the RILU for publishing an organ for workers in the food and drink industries. It was then left to the congress itself to engage in any further discussion (*Protokoll des 11. Kongresses der Internationalen Union der Organisationen der Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen der Lebens- und Genußmittelindustrie. Abgehalten vom 30. September bis 2. Oktobe 1923 im Volkshaus zu Brüssel, Zürich, 1923*, pp. 13–14, and the report of the Russian delegation preserved in RGASPI 534/5/95/45–9).
- 93 On the course of this congress, see *Protokoll des 11. Kongresses der Internationalen Union 1923*, the uncorrected typewritten version in RGASPI 534/5/95/11–40, the alterations to this desired by the Russian speakers, who wanted to 'polish' their contributions and make them more extensive (RGASPI 534/5/94/99–104) and the report of the Russian delegation (RGASPI 534/5/95/50–88).

The congress also rejected a Russian motion that the IUF should take over the initiative for the establishment of a united front from both the RILU and the IFTU. The congress wanted to continue its previous custom of turning either to Moscow or to Amsterdam, whenever necessary. This would mean that the congress did not have to conduct a discussion on the IFTU. (The decision on this point subsequently allowed the false impression to arise that the IUF regarded itself as standing between the two internationals). The congress then altered the statutes to enshrine the conditions the Executive had set for the admission of the Russians. The statutes now forbade the creation of 'parallel centres' and the issuing of international publications by any member union. After a great deal of haggling over their precise wording, even the Russian delegation finally voted for the new statutes. The only delegation to vote against was the one from the Netherlands, because the Dutch thought the Russians had not been treated with sufficient severity. In any case, the Russian attitude was entirely determined by their expectation that a revolution was about to happen in Germany. They emphatically called for the next IUF congress to meet in Germany (or in Soviet Germany?)⁹⁴ and introduced a resolution of solidarity in view of the increasing acuteness of the situation there, the possibility of a military dictatorship and the rise of the 'Bavarian reaction', but this resolution was handed over to the Executive to be made more specific. When the new Executive was elected, the Russians did not succeed in gaining greater representation than was provided for by the principle 'a seat for each organisation'. This principle worked to their disadvantage because they were a single industrial federation, whereas the three separate German professional organisations had three seats on the Executive. Krol' was therefore the only Russian elected, though the seat of the Swiss communist Ormianer was also confirmed, despite some opposition and some abstentions. The Russian counterstroke to this was to abstain during the election of the secretary, Schifferstein.⁹⁵

94 The Russians had also wanted the 1923 congress to be held in Germany. Although Brussels had been chosen long before, a German *venue* was actually under consideration for a period of time during the summer of 1923, as it was not certain whether the Belgian food workers' union would be able to get their government to grant entry visas to the Russians. They did eventually succeed in procuring the visas, so the original meeting-place was confirmed. After his return to Moscow, Krol' voiced his disappointment about this in a declaration in the Soviet trade-union newspaper *Trud* that the IUF leadership had been terrified by the possibility of a revolution in Germany and therefore retreated to a 'calmer' country. This provoked the IUF itself into making a sharp rejoinder in its own journal ('In eigener Sache', *Mitteilungsblatt der IUL*, no. 8–9, end of October 1923).

95 According to the report of the Russian delegation, 'the congress closed with a short address

The decision to admit the Russians to membership set off a reaction: the most determined opponent of the idea, the Dutch association of bakery workers and caterers, decided to leave the IUF. There were rumours that it wanted to organise a new international. Attempts by the IUF Executive to bring about a compromise were unsuccessful. When it proposed a conference to discuss the matter, the Dutch said they would only be prepared to meet if the conference were called by the IFTU. The IFTU in its turn refused to do so, since this was an internal IUF matter.⁹⁶ The IFTU was not, however, held back by the same constitutional scruples when it was a matter of providing a journalistic outlet for the Dutch opposition, which is not surprising in view of the evident political sympathy between the two organisations. In its press organs, the IFTU gave the Dutch organisation's withdrawal from the IUF a considerable amount of publicity. Schifferstein regretted this, and it caused him to send a lengthy explanation, which included a detailed presentation of the whole 'Russian question'.⁹⁷

This dispute, and the conflict over the endeavours of the IFTU to subject the ITSS to a stricter discipline, in advance of the IFTU congress which was due to take place in June, led numerous members of the IUF Executive to voice criticisms of the IFTU when it sat next, at the end of April 1924, even though Krol' was absent through illness.⁹⁸ The sense of the meeting was that while the IUF had refused to decide for Moscow, it would also refuse to enter into a dependent relationship with Amsterdam.

by comrade Wilhelm. A triple "Hurrah" then rang out. The anthem of the proletariat, the "International", did not get an airing' (RGASPI 534/5/94/88).

96 Memorandum of 15 January 1924 by Schifferstein (RGASPI 105/1/13/12) and *Tätigkeitsbericht des Sekretariats der IUL und Berichte der angeschlossenen Organisationen an den III. Internationalen Kongreß der Lebensmittelarbeiter in Kopenhagen*, Zürich, 1925, pp. 21–2.

97 *Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 54, 8 January 1924; S. Goudsmit, 'Der Austritt der holländischen Bäckerorganisation aus der Lebensmittelinternationale', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, April–June 1924, pp. 181–4; and Jean Schifferstein, 'L'attitude de l'Internationale des ouvriers de l'alimentation dans la question de l'adhésion de la fédération russe des ouvriers de l'alimentation', *Bulletin d'Informations de l'U.I.A.*, no. 7, August 1924. It is possibly against this background that a general attack was made a few months later on the IUF by a leading Amsterdamer, Stenhuis. He bluntly denied its justification for existing, in view of the fact that there already was a general organisation for all unskilled workers in the shape of the International Federation of General Factory Workers. (See L'Exécutif de l'U.I.A., 'Questions de limites syndicales', *Bulletin d'Informations de l'U.I.A.*, no. 10, November 1924).

98 'Procès-verbal de la séance du Comité directeur de l'Union, tenue à Berne, Maison du Peuple, le 22 avril 1924', *Bulletin d'Informations de l'U.I.A.*, no. 4, end of April 1924.

In Moscow, too, they now had to assess the consequences of the IUF's decisions at its congress. The Central Committee of the Russian food workers' union was divided over the question of the IPC, as Krol' told a sitting of the Executive Bureau of the RILU when he reported to it on the IUF congress. But it finally came to the conclusion that they had no option but to leave the IPC. The RILU Secretariat confirmed this decision at its 7 May 1924 sitting, as did the congress of the Russian food workers' union some weeks later (during the week of 24–30 May). The IPC would continue to exist, but only for the independent organisations which had not been included in the IUF (above all the CGTU Federation of Food Workers' Unions) and the minorities within the Amsterdam unions. (In any case, the range of activities of the IPC went beyond the catchment area of the IUF, extending as it did to the Tobacco Workers and the Hotel, Bar and Restaurant Workers, which had their own ITSS, without any Russian members).⁹⁹ There was some criticism of the decision to leave the IPC at the Third RILU Congress, but this came only from a German delegate, and was rejected by Krol'. The new approach was approved in the congress's resolution on the IPCs.¹⁰⁰

The significance of the IUF's decision was clearly overestimated in Moscow. The Russians saw in it a preparedness to stay halfway between the two rival internationals, and to communicate with both of them on an equal basis, whereas in fact the IUF was only interested in maintaining its independence as an organisation.¹⁰¹ For most of the IUF leaders, there was no contradiction involved in the fact that their political sympathies continued to lie with Amsterdam. The decision made in principle at the April meeting of the IUF Executive to visit Moscow (to attend the congress of the Russian food workers' union), which was reversed on purely financial grounds, was also misinterpreted as a sign of readiness to take part in the RILU congress.¹⁰²

99 RGASPI 534/3/47/9–10; RGASPI 534/3/84; *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 61–2; 'Der v. Allrussische Kongreß der Lebensmittelarbeiter', *Internationales Mitteilungsblatt für die Nahrungs-, Genuß-, Tabak- und gastwirtsgewerblichen Arbeiter*, no. 5–6, 1924, pp. 4–5; and Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 117.

100 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Abgehalten in Moskau vom 8. bis 21. Juli 1924*, Berlin, 1924, pp. 33, 156, 162–3 and 356–7.

101 This inflated view of the IUF's decision is expressed, for example, in the wording of the Executive Bureau's report to the Third RILU Congress, where it is stated that the IUF Executive at its most recent meeting refused to enter into 'an organisational connection with the Amsterdam International'. The Executive Bureau was also wrong to conclude that the IUF proposed at its next congress to alter its statutes so as to make an IUF trade union's membership in the RILU of the same character as its membership in the IFTU (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 153).

102 Compare the wording in the report of the IUF Executive's April sitting (*Bulletin d'Informa-*

The mood in the IUF in fact soon changed. Schifferstein had certified in his circular of January 1924 on the withdrawal of the Dutch from the IUF that the Russians had acted in accordance with the statutes,¹⁰³ but in July he felt able to state that they had breached their obligations. One reason for this change was the way the decision of the Russian food workers' union to withdraw from the IPC at its May congress was worded. According to the Russians' formulation, they would continue to advocate the principles of the RILU within the IUF. A more important reason, however, was the reappearance of the IPC organ. Although it now came out under the new title of 'International Information Journal for Workers in the Food and Drink, Tobacco and Hotel and Catering Trades', thus extending the area covered far beyond the limits of the IUF, the IUF Executive still thought the publication was a breach of the Brussels resolutions. It approached the Russians, asking them call a halt to the publication of the new IPC organ. They refused. In view of this development, Schifferstein declared that they would now need to investigate whether the Russians could still remain members of the IUF.¹⁰⁴ The IPC responded to this with a fierce protest, in which it stated that it had 'no relationship with the Russians', and that they therefore had no part in the publication of the information journal and accordingly were unable to prevent it from being published. The IPC would only cease to exist if all its member organisations were to be admitted to the IUF.¹⁰⁵

Behind the scenes, however, a whole series of attempts were made to prevent a full-scale confrontation. The Swiss member of the IUF Executive, Ormianer (who was, as we noted earlier, a member of the communist party) tried to do this in a lengthy correspondence with the MEB. He was under pressure from the latter body to take part in the reinvigoration of the IPC, after he had been

tions de l'U.I.A., no. 4, end of April 1924) with Krol's speech at the Third RILU Congress (*Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß* 1924, pp. 162–3) and the report of the Central Committee of the Russian food workers' union on its activities made at the end of 1925 (RGASPI 534/5/96/102). The IUF had already had to correct a similar misunderstanding to the effect that it stood halfway between Amsterdam and Moscow after the Brussels congress ('In eigener Sache', *Mitteilungsblatt der IUL*, no. 8–9, end of October 1923).

103 RGASPI 105/1/13/12.

104 Jean Schifferstein, 'L'attitude de l'Internationale des ouvriers de l'alimentation dans la question de l'adhésion de la fédération russe des ouvriers de l'alimentation', *Bulletin d'Informations de l'U.I.A.*, no. 7, August 1924.

105 'Unsere Stellung zum Allrussischen Lebensmittelarbeiter-Verband und zur Lebensmittelarbeiter-Internationale', *Internationales Mitteilungsblatt für die Nahrungs-, Genuß-, Tabak- und gastwirtgewerblichen Arbeiter*, no. 7–8, 1924, pp. 2–3.

forced to leave it, and above all to contribute to the IPC's new press organ. The reappearance of the IPC's information bulletin, said the MEB, would mean 'taking up the struggle with the IUF'. The argument between them dragged on for many months. At the same time, the MEB repeatedly approached the Russian food workers, asking them to exert pressure on Ormianer, though they did not react to this. The problem with Ormianer was finally settled in October, when he was not re-elected to the leadership of the Swiss union of food and drink workers, and therefore also had to leave the IUF Executive. In view of this situation he decided, as he informed the MEB, 'to withdraw' (in other words, to resign from the communist party), since he had been pushed out by one side, while he no longer enjoyed harmonious relations with the other side. The MEB would perhaps not approve of this decision, but it would possibly comprehend it, since it had itself contributed to it. With Ormianer's removal, the Russians had lost an important advocate in the IUF leadership.¹⁰⁶

The Russians were entirely ready to make concessions to the IUF. The Presidium of the Russian food workers' union approached the new IPC with a request that it cease publication of its organ. When it met in November, the food workers' Central Committee explicitly backed up its Presidium, confirming in return that it would work within the IUF to secure the admission of the organisations which had not yet been allowed to join.¹⁰⁷ The IPC and the MEB, however, both refused the Russians' request, sending replies whose sarcastic tone indicated the sharpness of the disagreement.¹⁰⁸

When the IUF Executive met, on 28 and 29 March 1925 in Stuttgart, a compromise was reached. A big majority voted for an explicit commitment to the unification of the international trade-union movement under the IFTU. The Russians were asked to put a stop to 'anything which might hinder the achievement of unity'. But more far-reaching sanctions, culminating in expulsion, were not envisaged. Since the Russian trade unions as a whole were trying at exactly this period to achieve reconciliation with Amsterdam (which will be dealt with in the next chapter), the situation among the food workers' unions also

106 The correspondence on this subject is preserved in RGASPI 105/1/19. For the MEB and the IPC, Max Ziese was now joined by Paul Merker, the KPD member responsible for trade-union work in this area. He played a particularly prominent part in the dispute.

107 Golub and Shilovich 1989, p. 118.

108 RGASPI 105/1/18/135–6 and 137–9. The IPC's letter ended with this salutation: 'We send our fraternal greetings to you, who have victoriously overcome reformism'. The MEB's like this: 'In assuring you of our fraternal feelings and while expressing our admiration for the Russian trade unions, which have decisively defeated reformism on the territory of the USSR, we remain, with comradely greetings etc.'

became calmer. Half a year later, the IUF Secretariat could state in its report to the Copenhagen IUF congress (20–22 September 1925): 'Since the Stuttgart meeting, the Russian union has behaved correctly towards the Executive. No fundamental change in the attitude of the union had taken place. But since the Stuttgart meeting the union has observed the statutes of the IUF, while maintaining its own standpoint'.¹⁰⁹

The improvement in the atmosphere was also certainly helped by the fact that the food workers' IPC, which announced its return so loudly in the spring of 1924 with numerous issues of its information bulletin, was now rarely in evidence. The information bulletin appeared only sporadically. The IPC had in effect gone into suspended animation. Several attempts were made to breathe fresh life into it. The MEB tried, for example, in a letter sent on 8 April 1925 to the communist fraction of the Russian food workers' union, after a discussion with Krol', who had stopped off in Berlin on his way back to Russia after attending the Stuttgart meeting of the IUF Executive.¹¹⁰ But it was not until the CGTU food workers' union intervened with the Executive Bureau, in February 1926, that the latter began to take steps to restore the IPC to activity.¹¹¹ Since it was now entirely based on the CGTU food workers' union, however, it was almost invisible in linguistically German parts of Europe. Here the information bulletin only appeared now and again and therefore hardly encroached at

109 *Tätigkeitsbericht des Sekretariats der IUL*, 1925, pp. 27–8. On the Stuttgart meeting, see also Otto, 'Die Vorstandssitzung der Internationalen Lebensmittelarbeiter-Union', *Inprekorr*, no. 62, 17 April 1925, p. 843, and 'Vorstandssitzung der Intern. Lebensmittelarbeiter-Union', *Rotes Gewerkschaftsbulletin*, no. 15–16, 18 April 1925.

110 RGASPI 105/1/18/45.

111 RGASPI 105/1/18/1 and RGASPI 534/3/151/26–38. The CGTU food workers' trade union had again had to experience disappointment in September 1925 at the IUF congress, when its application for admission was rejected for the usual reason that a CGT trade union was already a member. A similar thing happened in the case of the Romanian food workers. (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses der IUL. Abgehalten vom 20. bis 22. September 1925 im Studentenheim in Kopenhagen*, Zürich, 1925, pp. 184–6. See also 'Bericht des Gen. Kroll über den III. Internationalen Kongreß der Nahrungsmittelarbeiter' in RGASPI 534/5/96/87–98). At the Copenhagen congress, Fimmen was also present as a guest. Whereas in April 1923 he had suggested to the IUF that instead of admitting the Russians it should form a working group with them, now, in his speech greeting the congress, he had the following to say: 'I welcome the chance to take part in your congress, because your secretariat is the first and so far the only one to establish international unity on a large scale. I can only give expression to the wish that your example will soon be followed by the other Trade Secretariats' (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses der IUL* 1925, p. 204).

all on the sphere of the IUF.¹¹² Russian membership of the IUF continued to create much tension and repeatedly led to disputes. But from 1925 onwards, the Russians were accepted by the Amsterdam-oriented majority, and their withdrawal from the IUF in 1929 was first and foremost a Soviet decision.

The final result of the developments that took place in the spring and summer of 1923 could not be foreseen, but they inevitably faced the IFTU with a decision of principle if it wanted actually to put a stop to the movement towards unity which was taking shape, rather than simply protesting strongly against it and ultimately allowing it to take its own course. The anger that had been building up over the previous months finally broke out openly at the IFTU Executive sitting of 3–4 August 1923. The day before a preparatory meeting of the bureau had heard Jouhaux summarise the state of affairs once again. It was decided that they would introduce a resolution drafted by Leipart the next day, which expressed the negative attitude of the ADGB majority to the unity movement.¹¹³

In view of the antipathy towards Fimmen that had been building up over the past weeks,¹¹⁴ this meeting of the highest executive body in the IFTU became the scene for a settlement of accounts with him. After Jouhaux had again outlined the state of affairs, presenting a report on Fimmen's 'mistakes', which began with 'black January', continued through his appearances in Germany and ended with the Berlin transport workers' conference, not one voice was raised in his defence. All the speakers condemned his behaviour, even if they did not let themselves be carried away into making extreme comments, except for Leipart, who accused him of only ever attacking the Germans. None of the speakers examined the reasons which lay behind his actions. They only said

112 On the IPC of the food and drink workers after 1926, see *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927*, pp. 116–17.

113 'Extract Minutes Bureau Meeting August 2nd, 1923' (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3).

114 The aggressive attitude taken towards Fimmen was no doubt in large part due to surprise in view of his previous role and his subsequent about-turn. Clearly, they did not give precise attention to his actual words, which allowed the growth of the feeling that he had 'betrayed' them. An example of this is the following reproach by Mertens: 'Was he not the one who', and then he listed the following actions: denounced the splitting activities of the communists for years, wrote letters of complaint to Moscow about this, and in his last letter of 30 January to Lozovsky declared all further correspondence with the RILU to be at an end, personally defied the opposition at the CGT congress in Lille, thereby unleashing tumultuous scenes, and so on. 'And now', Mertens continued 'quite suddenly, Fimmen makes an agreement with the very people who caused the split in the ranks of the workers' (Corn. Mertens, 'Explications nécessaires', *Le Mouvement syndical belge*, no. 12, 9 June 1923).

that experience showed it was impossible to co-operate with the communists. In Fimmen's reply one can sense the bitterness he felt over the attacks he had suffered for months on end. He again stated that various rumours were circulating about his private life, which was alleged to be the reason for the line he had taken. He then explained once more what had impelled him to support the movement for unity. He had never regarded it as the job of the IFTU simply to 'play to the gallery'. It was for that reason that he had tried to draw lessons from what had happened since January. In any case, he said, he was quite the reverse of 'anti-German', because work with the German trade unions had always been particularly important to him. He added, in a comment plainly directed at Leipart: 'If the German workers' movement can fight against nationalism successfully, this would also be a great success for the workers of other countries'. As far as the communist trade unions were concerned, it should be understood that in Soviet Russia everything was in flux and the trade unions could win more room for manoeuvre. One should try to influence this development. Finally he made it clear that in view of his isolation within the IFTU he could no longer remain as its secretary.

Mertens then introduced a resolution outlining the majority's standpoint on the question of unity. The IFTU, he said, represented international trade-union unity, and in each country only one national centre could adhere to it. The Russian trade unions could also do this if they stopped attacking the IFTU. The ITSS were invited to follow the same line. They had therefore called a meeting with them to discuss this. Mertens's resolution also included a 'declaration of principle' containing a commitment to the abolition of capitalism on the basis of democracy and the unification of the international working class. Fimmen was the only member of the Executive to vote against this resolution.

This decided the matter of Fimmen's future position. Even so, after a short exchange of views, he declared that he was prepared to avoid resigning immediately, as this would be understood on the outside as a negative signal, and instead to wait for the appropriate moment to leave. The official *communiqué* issued by the IFTU on the course of the meeting therefore stayed silent about his resignation (which had only been postponed).¹¹⁵ It was only a few weeks,

115 Compare 'Extract Minutes Management Committee Meeting August 3rd & 4th 1923', (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3) with 'Vorstandssitzung des IGB am 3. und 4 August 1923 in Amsterdam', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 6, November–December 1923, pp. 256–8. Fimmen's resignation was then discussed briefly at a meeting of the ADGB Executive a month later on the basis of information provided by Leipart – Simon and Dißmann, who stood close to Fimmen politically, also took part – but the short report that has survived of this meeting does not give any details on the course of the discussion (Ruck 1985, p. 909).

however, before Fimmen made a gloomy speech to the British Trades Union Congress, which was entirely dominated by a pessimistic survey of the condition of the European workers' movement, and in it he pointed out that it was the last time he would be able to greet the TUC in the name of the IFTU.¹¹⁶ After this, rumours of his dismissal began to circulate, which the IFTU immediately denied, saying that Fimmen would only resign when the circumstances were appropriate. The way this statement was formulated, however, made it clear that in the IFTU Executive's view the sooner this happened, the better.¹¹⁷

The resolution of the IFTU Executive also provoked a reaction from Russia. On 11 September 1923, the Presidium of the VTsSPS sent a letter to the IFTU. The resolution, it said, which its members had only found out about from the newspapers, had made them furious. The IFTU was issuing an ultimatum, but nothing could force the revolutionary trade unions to change their standpoint. In reality the IFTU was faced with the question: does it desire a united front or not?¹¹⁸ But this statement by the VTsSPS was more a commentary on events than an offer or an invitation which would require the IFTU to give a reply.

At its next sitting, on 22–23 August, the IFTU bureau did not take up the complex of questions involved in the united front.¹¹⁹ Soon afterwards, however, it was forced to do so by the decision of the IUF congress at the end of September on the admission of the Russian food workers' union. The question of reparations, and the endeavour to bring the Ruhr crisis to an end with the help of the League of Nations, were the main matters discussed at the IFTU bureau's sitting of 2–4 October, and a joint meeting with the bureau of the LSI also took place on these subjects. Both organisations were forced to concede once again that their own influence on affairs extended to little more than issuing appeals. But the IFTU also had to deal with the IUF. The main objective was to prevent it from breaking away. The Executive was called for 8 November, and a joint conference was called for 9 November with all the ITSS.¹²⁰ A week later the

116 *Report of Proceedings at the Fifty-Fifth Annual Trades Union Congress held at Plymouth on September 3rd to 8th, 1923*, London, 1923, pp. 337–40.

117 *Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 41, 2 October 1923. Harry Pollitt, for instance, reported on Fimmen's impending removal in an article in the British communist paper *The Workers' Weekly*, 2 November 1923 (from a newspaper cutting in MRC MSS 292/915.5/3).

118 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 239.

119 'Bürositzung des IGB abgehalten in Amsterdam am 22. und 23. August 1923', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 6, November–December 1923, p. 259.

120 'Extract Minutes Bureau Meeting October 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1923' (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3) and 'Bürositzung des IGB abgehalten in Brüssel am 2., 3., und 4. Oktober 1923', *Die interna-*

IFTU bureau reminded the IUF, in view of its decision on Russian membership, that the Executive had issued a resolution at the beginning of August giving the requirements the Russians had to fulfil.¹²¹

Fimmen's resignation from his IFTU post was announced just before the meeting of the Executive. It became unavoidable after the ADGB leadership sent a letter in the first half of October expressing its astonishment that he was still in office.¹²² The circumstances the IFTU wanted to play down were naturally immediately seized on by the communist press and Fimmen's resignation was branded a sacking for political reasons.¹²³

Somewhat surprisingly, the British TUC now decided to intervene. At the beginning of November, the General Council of the TUC discussed the Fimmen affair and declared its dissatisfaction. The TUC representatives on the IFTU Executive (J.H. Thomas and J.B. Williams) were instructed to present a thorough report on the matter. Both the IFTU and Fimmen were also asked to provide information.¹²⁴ The TUC's sudden interest did not simply arise from a few new members of the General Council elected at the Plymouth congress, or from informal conversations Fimmen had certainly had while he was there. There had been a veritable campaign over the issue. Local groups (Trades and

tionale Gewerkschaftsbewegung, no. 6, November–December 1923, pp. 260–1. Fimmen did not take part in this sitting as he was on leave.

121 MRC MSS 292/915.5/3.

122 According to Fimmen, in a letter to the TUC of 16 November (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3). The 'astonishment' of the ADGB looked as if it was made to order, for the final words in the IFTU's press report that Fimmen would resign when appropriate were: 'Up to the present the Executive does not have any information about the precise date of his resignation' (*Pressberichte des IGB*, no. 21, 2 October 1923).

123 The IFTU announced that Fimmen would officially resign as IFTU secretary on 1 November, although he had already been elected in the middle of October as international secretary of the seamen's union (*Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 44, 23 October 1923). The communist *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, in contrast, spoke of his 'removal' as a result of his struggle for the united front, the policy which he himself once again justified at length in an interview with the organ of Dutch social democracy (W.L., 'Einheitsfront Moskau-Amsterdam', *Inprekorr*, no. 172, 7 November 1923, p. 1457). Fimmen had been chief secretary of the IFTU since 1919, and honorary secretary of the ITF. In October 1923, the seamen's section of the ITF held a congress, which had, among other things, to appoint a chief secretary. Williams was originally envisaged for this post, but he withdrew so that Fimmen could continue working as a chief secretary in the ITF. (*Bericht über den Kongreß der Internationalen Transportarbeiter-Föderation. Abgehalten in Hamburg vom 7. bis 12. August 1924 im Großen Saale des Gewerkschaftshauses*, Amsterdam, 1924, p. 112).

124 Letter from the TUC secretary Fred Bramley to Thomas, 5 November 1923 (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3).

Labour Councils) had sent resolutions to the General Council calling on the TUC to take action over the case of Fimmen.¹²⁵

The bureau of the IFTU therefore had to deal with the British intervention on the eve of the sitting of the Executive and the meeting with the International Trade Secretariats. Extracts from the minutes of the Executive sitting at the beginning of August which concerned Fimmen were sent to the TUC, and Fimmen himself also contacted that body with a detailed account of the reasons for his resignation.¹²⁶ He had now withdrawn from the IFTU leadership, but he would be re-elected to the Executive nine months later, this time in his capacity as an ITS representative, and he would continue to exert influence in the IFTU as the spokesman of one of the most important ITSS, particularly through the regular meetings that now took place between them and the IFTU. This was undoubtedly unwelcome to some of his opponents, who would have preferred him to withdraw completely from any position of leadership in the international trade-union movement.

Thanks to British intervention, a new spirit was now abroad in the IFTU. This was shown straight away at the sitting of the Executive held on 8 November, at which Purcell announced his entry into the IFTU's ruling body. (He was representing an absent British member, and during the next sitting, held jointly with the ITSS, he was reinforced by Ben Tillett, also a veteran of the 1920 British Labour Delegation to Russia, although the British chairman of the IFTU, Thomas, was unable to be present that day owing to wage negotiations). The main issue on 8 November was the line that should be taken at the session with the ITSS over the next few days. Purcell had definite reservations about the resolution presented by Jouhaux on behalf of the IFTU bureau, which called for a clear line of demarcation to be drawn separating the IFTU from the RILU and also excluding the Russian trade unions. Purcell stated emphatically that

125 See, for example, the 8 November resolution of the Birmingham Trades and Labour Council (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3). It can be assumed that communist trade unionists took the initiative in this campaign.

126 'Extract minutes Bureau Meeting November 7th 1923', letter from the IFTU to the TUC on 16 November and letter from Fimmen to the TUC on 16 November (MRC MSS 292/915.5/3). Fimmen wrote that the current offensive of the employers in Germany against the Eight Hour Day proved once again how right he was in his fears for the future which had led him to advocate a united front. All these materials were then presented to the International Committee of the TUC at its 10 December sitting, but that body simply expressed its regret over the whole affair. Later on, on 19 February 1924, the subject was broached once again before the committee. But it came to the conclusion that since Fimmen himself did not want to take any further action, there was nothing more it could do (MRC MSS 292/901/1).

he agreed with the bureau's fundamental rejection of communist trade-union policy as carried out in the West. But the resolution should do everything possible to arrive at an agreement with the Russian workers. From the point of view of the international situation, this was absolutely essential. Almost every speaker who followed was unable to avoid admitting, at least, that the road to the IFTU should be open to the Russians in principle, something which no one had ever denied. Leipart, however, who was far from being sympathetic to the idea of a united front, openly said that he too agreed with this approach, because he believed that no proper negotiations would ever come of it anyway. Jouhaux then proposed to reformulate his theses. The new version stated that they were ready in principle to admit the Russians 'while excluding the RILU' in line with the resolutions passed by the IFTU at its congresses. The bureau was empowered to conduct discussions with the VTsSPS in order to bring about unity 'on the basis of the statutes and the programme' of the IFTU. Only the other German member of the Executive, Graßmann, voted against this. The other points on the agenda, in contrast, were dealt with quickly, including a resolution regulating the organisational relationship between the IFTU and the ITSS.¹²⁷ (In this meeting of 8 November, where the participants were all IFTU leaders and there were no ITS representatives, no one dissented from these proposals).¹²⁸

The next two days saw the crucial test of this resolution.¹²⁹ The 15 members of the IFTU Executive met with 40 representatives of the 21 International Trade Secretariats, which represented the great majority of trade-union members. (The printworkers, furriers, hatters, carpenters and textile workers had asked to be excused; while there was no information given about the diamond workers, hairdressers and musicians). The whole of the first day was taken up by the news from Germany. Most of the participants were chiefly interested in the

127 'Meeting of the Management Committee of the International Federation of Trade Unions. Held in Amsterdam on November 8th 1923' (MRC MSS 292/915/10), and 'Beschlüsse der Vorstandssitzung des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes vom 8. November 1923 in Amsterdam', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January 1924, pp. 18–21.

128 Purcell, for instance, considered that his aim had been achieved when Jouhaux modified his resolution, since he was only interested in the establishment of relations with the IFTU at the level of the national trade-union centres. He did not speak during the next two days of discussions with the ITSS. The International Committee of the TUC noted when it met on 10 December that Purcell and Tillett had 'been able to allow the resolution to pass ... after great difficulties' (MRC MSS 292/901/1).

129 'Report of the Joint Meeting of the Management Committee of the IFTU and the International Trade Secretariats, November 9th and 10th 1923' (MRC MSS 292/915/10).

critical situation of the German trade unions, which were practically faced with bankruptcy after months of inflation, passive resistance and dramatic levels of unemployment, combined with a collapse in membership.¹³⁰ It was agreed that they should be given greater economic assistance. Fimmen then managed to bring the subject round to the political situation in Germany. He feared the emergence of a right-wing government – this was the time of the Hitler *putsch* and the military intervention ordered by the German central government against the social democratic-communist coalition governments of the states of Saxony and Thuringia – and he called for the international trade-union movement to prepare for that eventuality. No means of defence should be ruled out, he said. If an international strike could not be organised, then at least a boycott could be mounted. If it came to the point, the IFTU must procure weapons for the German workers. Dißmann and Tillett (who had just spent time in France and the Ruhr district) also expressed their anxieties about political developments in Germany. They were sharply contradicted by members of the IFTU Executive, particularly Leipart. Social democracy and the trade unions would not simply give up, he said. (He was to repeat this same objection to Fimmen, almost word for word, approximately ten years later, in the spring of 1933). Mertens, who emphatically rejected Fimmen's words about the procurement of weapons, was able to win the day with the proposal that it should be left to the discretion of the IFTU bureau to keep watch over developments in Germany.

The real subject of this meeting, however, was the Russians' relationship with the RILU, and, bound up with this, the relationship between the ITSS and the IFTU. There were no great differences of opinion over the general resolution discussed by the Executive the previous day, after Jouhaux had softened it. The only question which came up was the extent to which the offer to the Russians should be subject to various conditions, but this did not become a really significant issue until 1925. The discussion therefore concentrated on five points put forward by the Executive for the regulation of organisational relations between the ITSS and the IFTU. There was no dispute about the first four points. These prescribed that the ITSS should take part in IFTU congresses in a consultative capacity. Conferences should be called regularly and the ITSS should send

130 See the discussions in the ADGB Federal Committee on this on 8 September and 2 October and the appeal of the Central Federation of Roofers to the ADGB for assistance (Ruck 1985, pp. 926–7, 940–1, 981–2 and 987–8). At the beginning of April, Lozovsky had already received information given by Fimmen to a representative of the MEB that the German trade unions were no longer able to pay membership contributions to the IFTU (RGASPI 534/3/59/40).

three representatives to sit on the IFTU Executive. The two supporting pillars of the trade-union movement, the ITSS and the IFTU, should enter into a general obligation to work on an identical political basis. It was the fifth point that was controversial. This laid down membership criteria which were intended to bar the way to the entry of communist-led trade unions into ITSS, and this was to apply not only in the West, where it affected the organisations attached to the CGTU, a point on which there was general agreement, but also to the Russians. Very detailed stipulations had been drafted to exclude them. Their complexity arose from the fact that it was not possible simply to justify the exclusion of a trade union because it belonged to a national centre not affiliated to the IFTU. A rule of this kind would have excluded the internationally independent Norwegians, and above all the North Americans.¹³¹ The IFTU had a particular interest in retaining the latter because of their organisational and financial strength.

The exclusion of the Russians met with strong disagreement from some participants in the meeting, led by Fimmen, who was no longer a member of the Executive but was there as a representative of the ITF. He received abundant support from his ITF colleague Robert Williams, and also from the representatives of the IUF (its secretary Schifferstein and its chairman Wilhelm), from Simon and from Dißmann.¹³² The most incisive presentation of the arguments in favour of admitting the Russians was given by Dißmann: 'We must take things as they are, and attempt to find a way that leads to a compromise with

131 The wording of point five was as follows: 'It shall be a fundamental principle that only the following organisations may affiliate with an ITS: a) Organisations which are affiliated with their respective National Trade Union Centres, which in turn are affiliated with the IFTU; b) Organisations which are in no way associated with any other International (e.g. organisations belonging to the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions, which Federation is not affiliated with any of the existing internationals); c) Organisations which belong to a non-affiliated National Trade Union Centre, which does not make propaganda against the IFTU (e.g., organisations belonging to the AFL); d) Organisations not affiliated with their National Trade Union Centre, if this latter belongs to a Trade Union International which is opposed to the IFTU' (*Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January 1924, p. 20) [English: *The International Trade Union Review*, vol. IV, January/March 1924, no. 1, p. 20].

132 Dißmann had had to make great efforts to participate in the meeting, owing to the difficult financial situation of the DMV. See his letters to Ilg of 4 and 16 October 1923 (FES IMB 2144). Without doubt, the line he took in the discussion was connected with his simultaneous attempts to reach an agreement with the KPD metalworkers. Ilg, for his part, kept out of the discussion, not making a single intervention. This is eloquent enough in view of his previous privately expressed reservations about the 'Russian question'.

the Russians ... The question is, do we wish to reach a friendly compromise with the Russians or do we demand complete capitulation ... We must be as tolerant towards the Russians as we are to the Americans ... We ought rather to hold out the hand of friendship to the Russians in order to march shoulder to shoulder with them in the struggle against reaction'.

None of the objections passionately put forward by the supporters of Russian admission could alter the majority position. After it was agreed that they should poll the meeting on each of the Executive's five points, with each Trade Secretariat entitled to one vote, the first four were unanimously adopted. On the final point, the criteria for membership, 14 ITSS voted in favour, one abstained, and six voted against (the Clothing Workers, the Leather-Workers, the Stoneworkers, the IMF, the IUF and the ITF). The six were thus clearly in a minority. Six weeks earlier, the IUF had admitted the Russian food workers' union. The decision of this IFTU-ITS meeting, however, undoubtedly barred the way to the admission of any more individual Russian trade unions. A clear line of demarcation had thus been drawn at the level of the International Trade Secretariats. This meant that the discussion over admitting the Russians was transferred to the level of the IFTU and the Russian national trade-union centre. There had been an offer to the VTsSPS, but it was still a completely open question as to whether this had any meaning or any prospect of being realised. Several speakers hinted that the answer would depend on what eventual conditions were set by the IFTU. It would also depend on whether the Russians were able to bring to an end their affiliation to the RILU.

The question of Fimmen had surfaced again and again in the course of the discussion, in the context of the need to 'discipline' possible deviators on the 'Russian question'. When, for instance, Williams mentioned the Berlin transport workers' congress, which had started the process that led to Fimmen's resignation, Jouhaux was quick to correct him. From his point of view, he said, Fimmen had resigned voluntarily. This was certainly true in formal terms, but it was also true that there had been a massive campaign against him behind the scenes. Fimmen himself therefore made a personal declaration at the end of the sitting, after the sending of a delegation to Mexico had been discussed, that he had left the IFTU because of differences of opinion. Even so, he added, it remained his conviction that the IFTU alone was the embodiment of the united trade-union international.

The attempts to get into contact with the Russian trade unions now no longer reflected the protestations that had been made about the IFTU's great interest in achieving this. The IFTU bureau waited a month, until 11 December, before sending a letter. This said that they had discussed the applications of the Russian trade unions for membership in the ITSS and were astonished

that they thought they could combine this with membership in the RILU. Nevertheless, they were not in principle against co-operating with the Russians, and they then quoted Jouhaux's resolution which empowered the bureau to negotiate with the Russians over unity on the basis of the statutes and the programme of the IFTU, while taking account of the IFTU's congress resolutions.¹³³ The Russian reaction was correspondingly slow. Not until 5 February 1924, 'owing to the absence of various members', did the VTsSPS presidium produce a reply. It expressed surprise that a concrete proposal for a conference for a joint struggle against reaction and Fascism should be met with a reference to the decisions of congresses in which the Russians had not taken part. Moreover, there was no contradiction between the Russian trade unions' membership of the RILU and their wish to be accepted into the ITSS at the same time. What the VTsSPS was interested in was joint action. That is why they wanted to hold a joint conference. The letter ended by asking for 'a time and a place'.¹³⁴

Thus a long exchange of letters and proposals had brought the two sides no further forward. While both affirmed their commitment in principle to unity of action, they were well able to publicise their completely different proposals without running any risk that they might actually be put into effect.¹³⁵ No wonder the IFTU bureau decided at its session of 28 February to 1 March 1924 to 'refrain' from answering the Russian letter, and simply 'took note' of it.¹³⁶ In this situation the only thing that could infuse the process of exchanging proposals with a new dynamism was a change in the attitude of one side or the other. This would in fact happen as a result of the IFTU congress held in June 1924.

133 *Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR 1922–1924 g. Otchet VTsSPS k VI s'ezdu professional'nykh soiuзов*, Moscow, 1924, pp. 7–8.

134 *Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR 1922–1924* 1924, p. 8, and *Tätigkeitsbericht des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes* 1924, pp. 95–6.

135 See, for example, the long list of comments on the Russian letter of February 1924 in *Tätigkeitsbericht des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes* 1924, pp. 96–8.

136 'Bürositzung des IGB am 28. und 29. Februar und 1. März 1924 in Amsterdam', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 2, April–June 1924, pp. 132–3, and *Tätigkeitsbericht des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes* 1924, p. 96. This attitude was mirrored on the other side. The Fourth Plenum of the VTsSPS approved both aspects of the international policy of the Russian trade unions: their attempt to enter the ITSS and their appeal to the IFTU for unity of action (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 240–1).

3 The Third Session of the Central Council

We have somewhat anticipated later developments by presenting the united front campaign, which took shape during the Ruhr crisis. It hardly produced the kind of results that would cast doubt on the need for the RILU to continue in existence. Quite the reverse, in fact. The repeated affirmation of the struggle for unity was accompanied by the progressive consolidation of the RILU in organisational and political terms. This was the reason why the third session of the Central Council was called at the end of June 1923, just half a year after the second RILU congress had taken place.¹³⁷

The main subject of its deliberations appeared to be the organisational and political initiatives taken to establish a united front (in which context the news about the decisions of the ITF General Council, which arrived in the course of the session, must have been felt as a bitter blow). An independent item of the agenda, introduced by Nin, on the struggle against Fascism, was discussed in connection with the united front campaign. This was the first attempt by a leader of the RILU to evaluate this new phenomenon, which was distinguished from the 'normal' type of reaction by its mass basis.

137 On the course of the session, see *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates* 1923. This contains the speeches, partly verbatim, and partly in summary. Two reports which were summarised in this document were then published *in extenso* as pamphlets: Lozovsky's report on future tasks (A. Losowsky, *Die nächsten Aufgaben der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, Berlin, 1923) and Nin's report on Fascism. The latter was published in Russian as Andrej Nin 1923 and in English as Andreas Nin 1923. The material in the RILU archive on the third session (RGASPI 534/2/3-23) includes its minutes, though not the minutes of its committees, the text of its resolutions and the written reports which were sent in to it by various bodies (the Executive Bureau, the MEB, the KPD, the CGTU, the MVS, and the Spanish CSRS) and a report on activities in Asia. Extracts from the German and Spanish reports were published in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, July 1923, on pp. 639-44 and 657-60 respectively. Apart from this, there is a list of delegates in the official report which names 25 foreign representatives, eight delegates from the VTsSPS and 22 from individual Russian trade unions. The members of the Executive Bureau should also of course be counted as participants. The report of the mandate commission indicated the number of participants was as follows: 32 delegates from 14 countries (they were subdivided country by country) 'with a deliberative vote' and 52 delegates from 7 countries 'with a consultative voice'. In addition there were 22 guests (*Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates* 1923, p. 73). No indication was, however, given as to how far this distribution of delegates conformed to the provisions contained in the statutes of the RILU. In other words, no figures were given on the number of adherents of the RILU in each country and the way the allotment of mandates was derived from this, and there was no indication of which national representatives were absent from the session.

But what concerned the delegates more than this was a set of problems which had emerged in several countries. At least they could report that almost everywhere their relationship with the syndicalists had been clarified. Only a small anarcho-syndicalist minority continued to fight against the RILU (though in Spain this minority was at the head of the organisation). What continued to be a problem, however, was the complicated organisational relationship between minorities in the reformist organisations and independent trade unions. This had led to conflicts in a whole range of countries. In Germany, for example, the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain (UdHuK) tried once again to make itself the contact point for all expelled trade unionists. This suggestion was immediately and decisively rejected.

The problems of some countries needed a great deal of discussion, with the setting up of specific committees to draft special resolutions. With regard to the USA, the TUEL was given pride of place, while independent organisations such as the IWW or the United Labor Council were now regarded as almost insignificant.¹³⁸ The English situation, which was characterised by a weak communist party but a broad current of opposition, was repeatedly addressed, and Lozovsky made it plain that in his view a special kind of oppositional structure should be established there. But the late arrival of the British delegation (it did not arrive until the session was already in progress) made it necessary to postpone the debate on this proposal, which bore fruit the following year when the Minority Movement was established.

There had been difficulties in Spain with co-ordination between the communist opposition in the UGT, which had been expelled at the end of 1922, and the revolutionary syndicalist minority in the CNT. It is true that joint bodies were set up at the end of 1922 in the shape of the Spanish CSRs, but the participation of the communist opposition in these was manifestly half-hearted. The Central Council now called on the UGT communists to join the CNT, in accordance with the previous decisions of the RILU. The supporters of the RILU, it said, should concentrate on carrying on the struggle under the leadership of the CNT. It is doubtful whether the hopes that were expressed in this instruction ever had any prospect of being realised; they were in any case rendered nugatory three months later by the establishment of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship.

¹³⁸ The Central Council session had been preceded by discussions in the Executive Bureau about the reciprocal accusations made by the TUEL and the ULC that each of them had failed to abide by the decision of the Second RILU Congress that they should co-operate (RGASPI 534/3/45/38 and 65).

The conflicts in the Czechoslovakian movement were much more significant. The way the MVS was organised as a single unitary federation had already come in for criticism. The RILU congress had proclaimed that it was necessary to create industrial sections within the MVS. This process therefore had to happen, but it was accompanied by a series of objections from the federation. In addition to this, there were independent trade unions in Czechoslovakia, which had declared their support for the RILU but continued to criticise the MVS and stood outside it (the background of this situation was the earlier split in the trade-union movement on national lines). After long debates in the plenum and the committees, an extremely detailed resolution was drawn up which regulated the federation's affairs right down to the question of how to deal with the duty to subscribe to the trade-union press organ in cases where a family contained more than one trade-union member. The most important aspect of the resolution, however, was naturally its rules for combining all trade unions under a single national centre, which also governed the way this national centre should be organised.

The question of the trade-union movement in the colonies, to which the first two congresses had attached such great importance, was addressed only by Lozovsky, who spoke of its future tasks both in his written report and in his introductory speech. It was then handed over to be discussed by a committee, after which Heller laid the committee's resolution before a plenary session of the congress. He was obliged to point out that the adherents of the RILU in the metropolitan countries had hardly fulfilled their duty to come to the support of the movement in the colonies. The resolution laid its main stress on the need for this assistance, only mentioning the actual situation in the countries concerned in passing. (In the course of the plenary session, however, a statement of solidarity with the striking railway workers of Java was passed after the Indonesian delegate Tan Malaka had given a report). The discussion of the need to extend the port bureaux and to work among seamen also had a certain connection with the colonial agitation. A resolution was passed emphasising the particular importance of this work for the establishment of communications, and also the need to prepare for the sabotage of transport facilities in case a war broke out.

A theme that was taken up for the first time here, and that would re-emerge again and again subsequently, was 'strike strategy'. This related to the phenomenon of the numerous 'wildcat strikes' which had occurred since the end of the war. They often broke out against the wishes of the trade-union leadership, and they often ended in defeat. A committee was set up under the chairmanship of Walcher to discuss the forms of a strike, the reasons for its failure, or, sometimes, its success, and to establish what the attitude of the RILU should

be in the future, and what were the conditions for a victorious struggle. It did not, however, come to any definite conclusion. It was found that this question needed further discussion, in view of their lack of knowledge of what had happened in many countries, and it would be better to examine it at the next full congress of the organisation. After the Central Council meeting, the Executive Bureau sent out circulars indicating the problem and requesting information.¹³⁹ This was completely new territory, as Lozovsky put it,¹⁴⁰ since until then the strike question had always been discussed in relation to political strikes, as in the famous mass strike (general strike) discussions of the prewar workers' movement, which had been carried on in confrontation with the revolutionary syndicalists (though not exclusively with them). The tactics of an economic strike had played very little role in these discussions. But this problem now had to be examined, given the new significance of economic strikes and in particular their often 'unofficial' character.

The Third Session of the Central Council was thus devoted above all to matters of organisation.¹⁴¹ The centre of its attention was occupied by the question of implementing the principles laid down by the first two congresses of the RILU. The RILU's programmatic foundations were now no longer a subject of controversy. Without doubt, this expressed the increase in political homogeneity resulting from the withdrawal of the anarcho-syndicalists, and it was this alone that made the RILU's organisational consolidation possible. But the underlying question to be answered was naturally that of revolutionary perspectives and the possibility of achieving these. In this context, developments in Germany were at the forefront in the summer months of 1923.

139 Printed in *Bericht de Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 50–1.

140 The statement occurs in his introduction to the minutes of this Central Council session. He went on to say: 'If a comparison is made between what has been written about conducting a war and about conducting a strike, an astonishing contrast is revealed ... In the fight of 1,200,000 English coalminers, which shook the whole country for thirteen weeks, the general staff of the Miners' Federation displayed a level of sophistication the German General Staff could not have outdone even if it had managed to infiltrate into the staff of the French army during the imperialist war. Is this tremendous clash between two classes of less significance than the battles of Sadowa or Mukden?' (*Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates* 1923, pp. 3–4).

141 See also Lozovsky's general verdict on the session (A. Losowsky, 'Drei Jahre Kampf {Zu den Ergebnissen der Dritten Session des Zentralrates der RGI}', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7, July 1923, pp. 605–8).

4 A 'German October'? The Lessons of Defeat

Right from the beginning of the Ruhr crisis, the RILU was intensively involved with developments in Germany. These formed the starting-point for its united front initiatives, among which we should also count acts of material solidarity.¹⁴² In the middle of August, however, events escalated to a new level. The Bolshevik leaders regarded the tremendous inflation, and the growth in mass protest which led to the overthrow of the Cuno government by a general strike, as signs that Germany was ripe for the KPD to take power.¹⁴³ After an exchange of views with a number of KPD delegates in Moscow, including Walcher and Enderle, and discussions in the Bolshevik Politbureau, the ECCI had a meeting on 21 September with a broader KPD delegation, which included the chairman Brandler, who also represented the right of the party, and several representatives of the left. Agreement was reached on a plan which would start with the entry of KPD leaders into the social-democratic state governments of Saxony and Thuringia, and was supposed to culminate in an uprising at the beginning of November. The precise date would be set on the spot. Several technical military advisers had already arrived in Germany by then, and now in addition political representatives would be sent to give advice and assistance to the KPD. Radek and Piatakov were chosen for this task, and Rudzutak and Shmidt also formed part of the group. It should be added that the fight in the Bolshevik leadership between the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev troika and Trotsky had come into the open at this time and was already casting its shadow over the discussion of a number of tactical questions.

The RILU was also assigned a role in the plans for an uprising in Germany. Its Executive Bureau heard an extensive report from Brandler on 21 September, in the context of the ECCI discussion on the same day, and it set up a commission which had the task of working out appropriate measures, in close collaboration with the Comintern. The Executive Bureau itself did not make any further

142 In the spring of 1923, the VTsSPS sent 500,000 poods of wheat to Germany. In addition, the RILU and the Comintern collected money for the Ruhr workers in many parts of the world (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 72).

143 We do not propose to examine here either the internal political development of Germany at this time or the discussion in the leadership of the Bolshevik Party or the Comintern which led to the attempt to organise a 'German October'. We shall simply refer to the up-to-date presentation by Pierre Broué (1997, pp. 313–61). In this work he makes use of a collection of Comintern documents in German and Russian which is being prepared for publication. [This collection has now been published as *Deutscher Oktober 1923: ein Revolutionsplan und sein Scheitern*, edited by Bernhard H. Bayerlein, Berlin, 2003].

decisions about the organisation of the 'German October', but the RILU secretariat issued an extensive list of measures on 25 September. These were centred on the establishment of trade-union links between Germany and the neighbouring countries. The CGTU, for instance, was expected to do everything in its power to protect the German revolution. The secretariat was convinced that victory would shortly be theirs, as is shown by the last two points in its instructions: 'Preparations to move the representation of the RILU in Berlin (that is to say the MEB) to Denmark, Holland or Switzerland in case Germany is blockaded. Preparations to move the RILU itself to Germany when the revolutionary events get started.'¹⁴⁴ Lozovsky himself was in Germany from mid-October to mid-December.¹⁴⁵

Zinoviev's theses of 15 August 1923, with which the Bolshevik Politbureau began its discussion on German perspectives, had already pointed to the need to provide international security for a revolutionary Germany. The ITF was assigned a particularly important place in this undertaking.¹⁴⁶ On 29 September, Zinoviev and Lozovsky sent an urgent telegram to Fimmen asking him to come to Moscow for a meeting.¹⁴⁷ This was followed by an official appeal from the Russian transport workers' union, and a letter from other Russian trade-union leaders to all the ITSS calling on them to conduct a joint conference in solidarity with the German workers, but also with the workers in countries like Spain, Italy and Bulgaria.¹⁴⁸ A special approach was also made to the IMF. Vakssov, on behalf of the Russian metalworkers' union, sent a letter on 15 October proposing a joint meeting on Germany, combined with a continuation of the discussions over the Friedrichshafen agreement. In his reply, Ilg did not refer to German affairs.¹⁴⁹ Fimmen, for his part, immediately tried to get the ITF Executive Committee to give him an official mandate to go to Moscow, but it refused

144 RGASPI 534/3/48/25-6.

145 He came to Germany to organise international trade-union support for the German revolution, together with a three-man delegation of the CGTU, led by Monmousseau, and trade-union cadres belonging to the KPD. The meeting organised for this purpose took place close to the Chemnitz conference of factory councils which led the whole revolution to be called off (see below for more details of this). Lozovsky mentioned this in his report to the Third RILU Congress (*Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß* 1924, pp. 29-30. See also *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 264). He had returned to Moscow by the middle of December, as is shown by his renewed participation in the Executive Bureau's meetings.

146 Broué 1997, p. 324.

147 RGASPI 534/5/158/82.

148 'Die russischen Gewerkschaften an die Amsterdamer', *Inprekorr*, no. 156, 2 October 1923, pp. 1335-6.

149 RGASPI 534/5/48/42-4.

to do so.¹⁵⁰ In response, he reserved the right to travel there in a private capacity, but for the moment he could see no possibility of making this trip.

Fimmen was entirely clear about the political context of the invitation, not least because of his contacts with the MEB in Berlin. He therefore sent a detailed letter to Zinoviev on 19 October giving him his evaluation of the situation in writing (he had already given the MEB an oral statement in the presence of a number of Russian representatives). The isolation of the revolutionary centres in Germany by the 'White Guard' zones of the country, the predictable intervention of neighbouring countries (given the weakness of workers' organisations there), the inadequate armaments of the workers, and the insufficient supply of provisions, all seemed to him to make a revolutionary offensive impossible. The Red Army's assistance would come too late. One could not of course fail to respond to the enemy's attacks. The struggle 'must be taken up with all available means if it becomes unavoidable and is imposed on us. But every day this struggle is postponed means a gain for the workers and increases the possibility of conducting it successfully'. He therefore proposed that all their efforts should be concentrated in the first instance on creating a united front.¹⁵¹

Since he absolutely had to take part in the conference of the ITFU Executive with the representatives of the ITSS set for 9 November, he hoped to be able to travel to Moscow immediately afterwards. This plan was of course rendered superfluous by the failure of the communist uprising, and he did not in fact get to Moscow until the autumn of 1924.¹⁵²

150 'Kurzer Bericht über die Sitzung des Exekutivkomitees vom 14. und 15. Oktober in Amsterdam', *Mitteilungsblatt der ITF*, no. 17–20, 15 October 1923. In this document it is simply stated that the majority of the Executive rejected an invitation from the Russian transport workers' unions – which was presumably sent afterwards – to send an ITF delegation to Moscow. It is not clear whether Fimmen's colleagues in the Executive understood that this invitation was connected with the Comintern's preparations for the 'German October'. This is very unlikely, however.

151 RGASPI 534/19/67/36–42. This document has been published with an introduction by L.G. Babichenko until the title 'Krasnaia armiia pridet v Germanii s zaposdaniem', *Istoch-nik*, no. 2, 1994, pp. 26–32.

152 This long delay was also caused by another example of communist sloppiness. As Fimmen wrote on 8 November to Willi Münzenberg, the Russian news agency had stupidly announced his impending arrival in Moscow for discussions before it had happened. In response, two members of the ITF General Council intervened with the ITF Executive. As a result, nothing came of the journey. 'I reserved the right to go to Moscow on my own account, in other words to have a look at things on the spot, but I was unable to pursue my original intention of visiting Moscow for a few days to hold discussions'. He would definitely come to Moscow at some point, but not at present. 'I should be really grateful if my

The attempt to bring about a German revolution was also a factor in other initiatives of the Bolsheviks towards the international trade-union movement. This was shown, for example, in the endeavour of the Russian food workers' union to persuade the IUF to hold its congress at the end of September in Hamburg. But the IUF decided that this congress, which was intended to be a practical demonstration of the international united front, must take place outside Germany, a decision which was criticised by Krol', who as we saw earlier wanted the congress to pass an address of solidarity with the German workers. These difficulties in winning the active participation of the left wing of the IFTU in the German revolution showed that the terrain on which the revolution would be fought had by no means been so thoroughly prepared as was envisaged in the communists' plans.

The attempted uprising failed on 21 October, when the social democrats of Saxony, meeting in Chemnitz, refused to support a communist call for a general strike against the removal from office of the two 'workers' governments' of Saxony and Thuringia by the president of Germany. The reaction of the party leadership to this refusal, supported by the Comintern representative Radek, was to countermand its instruction to rise in revolt. Only in Hamburg did an attempted rising take place, and this was rapidly suppressed. The SPD withdrew from the German government. The KPD was prohibited on 23 November. The economic situation was stabilised, but the misery of the masses increased yet further in the winter of 1923–4, since the recovery of the economy was paid for with a fall in real wages, a longer working day owing to the abandonment of the Eight Hour Day rule which for the trade unions was a symbol of the November 1918 revolution, and an increase in unemployment.

The KPD now fell into a severe crisis. Under the impact of the defeat, the party leadership fell apart. It became divided into a 'Right' and a 'Centre Group'. The 'Right', around Brandler, Thalheimer and Walcher justified the course it had followed in October, namely the decision made at Chemnitz to call off the revolution. (The 'Centre Group' blamed Brandler and the 'Right' for the fail-

Russian friends didn't keep making my work more difficult, because this would ultimately make by own position untenable. It would no doubt be too optimistic to dare to hope that the gentlemen have learned something from what happened' (RGASPI 534/5/158/83). Fimmen had had his first contact with Münzenberg at the time of the famine relief effort in Russia in 1921. He then went on to participate in the campaign to help the German workers, out of which Workers' International Relief developed. This was a communist mass organisation led by Münzenberg, and it was actively supported by Fimmen throughout the 1920s. On this, and on his continued participation in the communist movement for unity, see my article 'Unity between "Amsterdam" and "Moscow"?' (Tosstorff 1997).

ure). In February 1924, with the backing of the Comintern, the 'Centre Group' took over the party leadership provisionally. This was only an intermediate stage, however, before control of the party was seized by the left wing around Ruth Fischer and Arkady Maslow, at the Frankfurt party congress of 7–10 April 1924. The left gave way to 'ultra-left' tendencies and rejected the united front policy which had previously been pursued.¹⁵³ The months that followed the failure of the 'German October' were thus marked by a great amount of confusion within the party. The old party leadership had lost its base of support and only continued in control in a formal sense. The situation of illegality considerably limited its ability to exert discipline. Moreover, the most important party leaders had been called to Moscow in December, where in the first half of January the Comintern leadership held a meeting to draw the 'Lessons of the German Events', during which it loaded the responsibility for the defeat onto Brandler and Thalheimer and set in motion the change in the party's leadership.¹⁵⁴ In this situation, many sections of the party conducted their own separate policies, and were influenced in doing this by the mood of the masses.

This had a particularly strong impact on work in the trade unions. The official line of the party had been to combine together the opposition movements within the trade unions and show them how to conquer the leadership. This policy had led to a big rise in the influence of the KPD in the trade unions during 1923. A conference of the oppositional local committees of the ADGB held at Weimar on 25 November was intended to be an important step towards taking over the leadership of the trade unions. 181 local committees were represented, and among the 273 delegates at the conference there were 63 SPD members and five from the USPD. These committees were mostly small, since the big ones were firmly in social-democratic hands. The intention of the Weimar conference was to persuade the trade-union opposition to take the necessary organisational steps to force the ADGB to hold an extraordinary congress. This would then adopt a programme of class struggle and transform the organisation accordingly. A commission was elected to present this demand to the ADGB Executive, but the latter rejected it on the grounds that it was a commun-

153 On these developments, see Weber 1969, vol. 1, pp. 53–62.

154 The discussion of the German events gained additional significance through being intertwined with the factional struggles in the Bolshevik Party, since Brandler, Thalheimer and their ally Radek were regarded as supporters of Trotsky. To shift responsibility for the German fiasco onto Brandler and Thalheimer was therefore to strike at Trotsky as well. Although Zinoviev and Stalin were also critical of the left wing of the KPD (for its 'ultra-left' tendencies on the trade-union question, for instance), both sides had a common enemy and could therefore form an alliance.

ist manoeuvre aimed at splitting the movement.¹⁵⁵ Further initiatives in this direction followed: a periodic 'information sheet for the trade-union opposition' was published, and a conference of trade-union secretaries who belonged to the KPD was held at the beginning of December. All these activities were conducted under the slogan: 'Save the Trade Unions!' Nevertheless, the party did not have sufficient strength to organise the 'extraordinary trade-union congress' called for by the body elected by the Weimar conference of 25 November.

For the KPD leadership, this was also a desperate attempt to keep the party focused on the struggle in the ADGB despite its increasing fragmentation. There was a big movement of withdrawal from the trade unions, and against this background new revolutionary trade unions were often set up. This expressed the widespread 'ultra-left' mood in the party, which was openly promoted by the left wing of the leadership.¹⁵⁶ Lozovsky too let himself be pulled along by this movement. At the beginning of November, he sent a memorandum from Berlin to the presidium of the ECCI and the Executive Bureau of the RILU outlining the perspectives for a possible split in the German trade unions. The communists, he said, had at least 50 percent of trade-union members behind them. A congress of the trade-union opposition should therefore be prepared, and if the ADGB leadership took measures against this, they should set up parallel unions. 'If it was possible to found independent trade unions in Yugoslavia under the white terror there, why is it impossible to do the same in Germany?'¹⁵⁷ When Lozovsky's proposals were discussed in the Executive Bureau, Nin found them plausible, but the other members were more cautious and demanded more detailed information. It was eventually decided that there should be a joint discussion of the question with the Comintern.¹⁵⁸

155 On the course of the conference, see *Wie retten wir die deutschen Gewerkschaften, wie retten wir die deutsche Arbeiterklasse vor dem Untergang? Konferenz der Ortsausschüsse des ADGB in Weimar am 25. November 1923. Protokoll*, Erfurt, 1923. See also the report of the trade-union section to the next KPD party congress in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands. Abgehalten in Frankfurt am Main vom 7. bis 10. April 1924*, pp. 61–4/19, here p. 64/2–3, and Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 234–5.

156 The confusion in the trade-union work of the party, the formation of revolutionary unions, and the capitulation to this trend of the leading party bodies, which were themselves undergoing a process of change, are graphically depicted in the special report to the Frankfurt congress by the trade-union section, a stronghold of the party Right, supplemented by a separate 'letter from the employees of the trade union section of the *Zentrale*' (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages 1924*, pp. 61–4/19 and 97–103). Heer-Kleinert gives a list of the separate trade unions set up at the time (1983, pp. 256–8).

157 SAPMO 16/3/91/1–2.

158 RGASPI 534/3/47/65–6.

The discussions in Moscow on the reasons for the German fiasco also included a number of special sessions on the trade-union question. In mid-December, representatives of both KPD factions presented their divergent views to the Executive Bureau, but that body did not make any concrete decision, contrary to the expectations of the Comintern.¹⁵⁹ The presidium of the ECCI discussed the trade-union question on 8 January.¹⁶⁰ A joint meeting of the communist fractions of the VTsSPS, the Central Committees of the individual trade unions and the Trade Union Council of the Moscow *guberniia* took place the next day.¹⁶¹ On 20 January, finally, there was a meeting of a special trade-union commission of the ECCI presidium.¹⁶²

At this meeting, Lozovsky, who was about to depart for France the same day, called for the various trade-union oppositions to join together. If they did this, they would pull 50 percent of the members in with them, he said. The trade unions could be reorganised, and hence conquered, on the basis of local committees and factory councils. (This would in practice lead to a split in the trade unions). Walcher declared his agreement with Lozovsky, but Fischer and Maslow responded more cautiously. They were, it is true, convinced that a split was certain to come about. But they were without doubt aware that they were on the brink of taking over the party leadership and would therefore have to shoulder concrete responsibility for these actions, just as Brandler and Walcher had been held responsible for the October defeat. They therefore spoke out against 'a mechanical split based on the setting of deadlines' – Lozovsky had envisaged May as the deadline – and they made a polemical attack on the Weimar conference, which they said was merely another form of the policy pursued in Saxony, with its orientation towards the conflicts within the ADGB.¹⁶³ In this way the KPD left avoided getting tied down to any concrete

159 RGASPI 534/3/47/201–3 and 216–17.

160 SAPMO I 2/3/192/62.

161 RGASPI 95/1/43.

162 SAPMO I 6/10/13.

163 See also the discussion in the trade-union section of the KPD at its 18 January 1924 meeting. Lozovsky had stopped in Berlin on his way to Paris, and he also took part in it, giving the participants a full account of the discussions that had been held in Moscow (SAPMO I 2/708/10). A letter of 2 February from 'Willi' on behalf of Walcher to the representatives of the KPD in Moscow provides some insight into the ever-changing views taken of the relationship of forces and the tactical considerations arising as a result, which nevertheless always took an imminent split in the trade unions as their point of departure. ('Willi' was probably Schoenbeck, an employee of the trade-union section. SAPMO I 6/3/137/24–7).

declaration of its position. Ruth Fischer could therefore comfortably pour scorn at the Fifth Comintern Congress on Lozovsky's 'famous May congress to divide up the cake, as I call it'. 'He said we should take 36 German trade unions and divide them into two halves with a knife. That is what he calls an organised split'.¹⁶⁴

The ECCI presidium's January decision on the trade-union question contained a fair amount of ambiguity. It came out in general terms against leaving the trade unions and also against deliberately splitting them, and it avoided taking up any kind of position on the results of the Weimar conference. It was, however, unambiguous in its basic approach: it was oriented towards a united front from below, which involved rejecting negotiations with top-level trade-union leaders, and its abandonment of the slogan 'Save the Trade Unions' was an open encouragement to ultra-leftist tendencies.¹⁶⁵ The line the RILU had to follow had now been prescribed by the ECCI. Not until 16 February, however, did its Executive Bureau again concern itself with the situation in Germany.¹⁶⁶ In the weeks that followed, it repeatedly had to discuss the impact of ultra-left moods on trade-union policy.¹⁶⁷

If the communists had ever had any illusions about the possibility of fighting openly for power within the ADGB, these were quickly destroyed by the ADGB Federal Committee when it met on 15–16 January. In view of the Weimar conference in particular, and the intensive communist campaign in general, the demand was made that all trade-union members dissociate themselves from these activities. This was naturally aimed first and foremost at those who

164 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß* 1924, vol. 1, p. 206.

165 This resolution is printed, together with the main resolution on the 'Lessons of the German Events' and a resolution on the organisation of factory cells, in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages* 1924, pp. 34–6.

166 RGASPI 534/3/76/77–8.

167 At its 1 March meeting, the Executive Bureau took note for the first time of the split in the UdHuK which had taken place in the meantime. In the next few weeks, it had to deal repeatedly with this union. On 10 March, it was also informed about the congress of the DMV in Kassel (RGASPI 534/3/76/19–20, 51–2, and 190). Two groupings had grown up within the UdHuK, which was an open challenge to the RILU and the official trade-union policy of the KPD. This situation led in February to a split in the Ruhr district. Two central committees were formed (the pro-KPD one was in Bochum, and this had the great majority of members behind it, achieving a big success in the factory council elections of the spring of 1924). The other one was in Berlin, where a separate organisation had been founded under the local UdHuK leader Weyer (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 184–5; Goch 1994, pp. 25–7 and Peterson 1993, pp. 240–2). These activities were sharply criticised in June and July 1924 at the Fifth Comintern Congress and the Third RILU Congress respectively.

occupied high-level positions in the trade unions. They were asked to sign a declaration to that effect, and this subsequently led to numerous expulsions. There were only two votes against the proposal, one of them presumably Dißmann's.¹⁶⁸ The ADGB also pursued a propaganda counter-offensive, issuing a pamphlet which examined the discussions at the Weimar conference and endeavoured to show that they justified the resolution of the Federal Committee against the 'subversion of the trade unions' by the communists.¹⁶⁹

In view of these difficulties, and in order to limit the damage, Lozovsky had to go back to Germany at the beginning of April to attend the congress of the KPD at which the party left, around Fischer and Maslow, finally took over the leadership.¹⁷⁰ His speech there was devoted first and foremost to disavowing the ultra-left policy of withdrawing from the trade unions and appealing to the new majority to stick firmly to the line of conquering the existing trade unions. They should not let themselves be diverted from this, he said, by their factional opposition to the party right.¹⁷¹ It was not least thanks

168 Kukuck and Schiffmann 1986, pp. 127–35. The names of the opponents of this motion are not given in the minutes. Dißmann had shown as a leader of the DMV that he was entirely ready to proceed against the communists by expelling them from the union if necessary, but his voting intention is clearly apparent from his speech: 'On the resolution presented here I should like to remark that every trade union must adhere to an orderly procedure for the case of an expulsion, following its statutes. The only way of taking the wind out of the sails of the communists in the trade unions is to pursue an honest working-class policy. I do not agree with this resolution'. The main reason for Dißmann's attitude was no doubt his continuing attempt to build an alliance with the KPD at the general assembly of the DMV. Another speaker against the motion was Berger of the Film Union, where communist influence was strong. Simon also expressed reservations.

169 The pamphlet: Ernst Schulze, *Die Rettung vor dem Untergang. Eine Antwort des Allgemeinen Deutschen Gewerkschafts-Bundes*, Berlin, 1924. See also the communist reply ('published by the Central Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Unity'): 'Wie Schulze, Leipart & Co. die deutsche Arbeiterschaft vor dem Untergang retten wollen! Der Vernichtungsfeldzug des ADGB gegen die Gewerkschafts-Opposition. Eine Antwort an den ADGB und Herrn Schulzes Pamphlet "Die Rettung vor dem Untergang"', n.d., n.p.

170 The course of the KPD's 1924 congress is summarised in Weber 1969, vol. 1, pp. 62–73.

171 *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages* 1924, pp. 331–7. Lozovsky's speech contained the following passage: 'I have received the impression from private conversations and fraction meetings that a whole group of comrades think in the following way: Walcher, the rightist, is in favour of the slogan of conquering the trade unions, so I, as a leftist, cannot support him on this question. Comrades, if for example Walcher were to say that $2 \times 2 = 4$, you would then have to assert that $2 \times 2 = 1$ umbrella in order to affirm your opposition to Walcher. One should not look at the trade union question from this angle. It is not

to Lozovsky's intervention (strengthened by a special letter from the ECCI to the KPD congress on the trade-union question,¹⁷² as well as a letter on the general situation) that the central importance of the principle of obligatory work in the existing trade unions was brought out. This somewhat reduced the independent importance of other activities, such as bringing together the unorganised or calling the Workers' Congress which the party left proposed in the spring of 1924 (a congress of this kind could be seen as an alternative to the extraordinary trade-union congress demanded by the left ever since the Weimar conference).¹⁷³

Lozovsky recorded his satisfaction with his achievements in the report he delivered to the Executive Bureau on 23 April.¹⁷⁴ Two months later, however, at the Fifth Comintern Congress, he was confronted with the accusation raised from two different ends of the political spectrum that he had vacillated between various extremely contradictory positions on the German question. The reproach came both from Radek, who counted here as the defender of the party right, and from Ruth Fischer.¹⁷⁵ When Radek said that Lozovsky ought to report on the development of trade-union work in Germany, an anonymous heckler interjected: 'He will make sure he doesn't!'¹⁷⁶ The heckler was right: Lozovsky avoided discussing Germany when he gave his report on the trade-union tactics of the Comintern.

The absence of Germany from Lozovsky's report was also an expression of the fact that trade-union work in Germany had lost the central position it had previously occupied in communist efforts to influence the international trade-union movement. The KPD still remained the strongest section of the Comintern in Western Europe, but the reality of trade-union work there looked very different from the picture painted by the declarations of principle at the party congress. In the course of the summer, peremptory resolutions were adopted against further attempts to split the unions, and the independent trade

unconditionally necessary to contrive a new approach, come what may' (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages* 1924, pp. 331–2).

172 *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages* 1924, pp. 71–7.

173 'Zur Lage in der Gewerkschaftsbewegung' and 'Resolution zum Arbeiterkongreß', *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages* 1924, pp. 389–93. On the 'Workers' Congress', which met in June, and turned out to be a very modest affair in spite of all the preceding sabre-rattling of the party leadership, see Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 255–6.

174 RGASPI 534/3/78/60–1.

175 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß* 1924, vol. 1, pp. 185 and 206.

176 The interjection is missing from the German minutes, but is present in the Russian version (it is quoted here from Chechevishnikov 1989, p. 188).

unions were instructed to disband themselves. Measures were then put in hand to implement these resolutions.¹⁷⁷ The new party leadership around Fischer and Maslow, however, did not in actual fact attach much importance to trade-union work, and this was shown by their drastic reduction in the size of the trade-union section. Its members all tended to be on the right or the centre of the party, and in the spring of 1924 they were either dismissed or transferred. No leftists were brought in to replace them, however. On the contrary, the section was practically liquidated.¹⁷⁸ Thus the organised influence of the KPD in the trade unions declined severely during the years 1924–5.¹⁷⁹ In September 1925, this decline would be one of the reasons given by the Comintern leadership for its removal of the Fischer-Maslow group from the Central Committee of the party.

5 The RILU as an Organisation at the Beginning of 1924: An Interim Summary

The failure of the numerous efforts made during 1923 to achieve a united front, all of which were based on developments in Germany, led to a change in a

177 This led to the incorporation of the UdHuK, the *Schiffahrtsbund* and other unions into the appropriate ADGB-affiliated union in the course of the next two years. See chapter 7, section 4.

178 The trade-union section previously had more than 40 functionaries working for it. There were dismissals as early as April and May 1924. The remnant of the trade-union section was then combined with the co-operative and agricultural section. For a year, trade-union work was carried out by only two people, though in the course of time more colleagues were brought in. (See a letter of 25 April 1924 from the secretariat of the trade-union section to the Politbureau, SAPMO I 2/708/16 and the report of the trade-union section for the period from the Third to the Fourth RILU Congress, SAPMO I 2/708/19). Not until the next year was a new trade-union secretariat set up, under the direction of Heckert, although it was much reduced in personnel, strictly subordinated to the Politbureau, and its functions were exclusively those of an executive organ (Weber 1969, vol. 1, p. 75). On 5 September 1925, shortly after the Comintern began its open attack on the Fischer-Maslow leadership, Heckert told a meeting of the trade-union section that it would be restocked up to the level of 15 to 20 functionaries, after this had been agreed with the ECCI (SAPMO I 2/708/11).

179 'Between 1924 and 1925, according to the communists' own data, their influence in the trade unions, to the extent that it was expressed in for example the number of delegates at trade union congresses, declined by a proportion of between a third and a tenth of the previous figure' (Heer-Kleinert 1983, p. 305).

central orientation of the RILU. From a realistic point of view, it was necessary to postpone the task of driving out its social-democratic rival, the IFTU. A new approach had to be found. The basis for this seemed to be available in Britain thanks to the TUC. For the next few years, Britain would replace Germany in the forefront of the aspirations of the Comintern and the RILU.

It was not just the defeat in Germany which led to a decline in the influence of the RILU. The third session of the Central Council in June 1923 had, it is true, presented a picture of consolidation, as well as of the approach of decisive struggles. But now further reverses in other countries had to be accepted. For instance, what had already been implied in 1922 now actually came to pass in March 1923 at the congress of Norwegian trade unions. The Norwegians definitively confirmed their exit from the IFTU, but they did not join the RILU. They said that to join that organisation would result in a breach with the ITSS, which would then lead to a split. They proposed to hold a referendum on the question. They had been invited to send a delegation to the Central Council session in June, but they refused to send one 'even for informational purposes'. The implementation of the referendum was delayed by the split in the Norwegian Workers' Party in the autumn of 1923, and then the actual voting took a long time. It was finally concluded in April 1924. Only 25 percent of the members participated. A third supported joining the RILU, but the vast majority followed the advice of the trade-union leadership around Ole Lian: he was in favour of retaining international independence and co-operating with the RILU from time to time.¹⁸⁰

In Finland, too, the trade-union federation remained independent. The reason for this was that the communists, who enjoyed a large majority, did not want to give the socialists an excuse to split the federation. The decision for independence had been made for the first time after a referendum in the spring of 1922 (see chapter 5, section 1). In the spring of 1923, the social democrats undertook an offensive in the trade unions in order to prevent them from joining the RILU at a congress due to be held in May. In order to retain unity, the communists made a number of concessions, among others in regard to the separation of the political party from the trade union. The result of the referendum was confirmed, but as far as its practical implementation was concerned, the leadership was given a free hand. The political situation (the illegality of the communist party) was also an important factor in the hesitation of the Finns over the question of joining the RILU. This would have given

180 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 211–13; *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates* 1923, p. 11; and Lorenz 1982, pp. 187–8.

rise to the danger that after a split, the communist-dominated part of the federation would immediately be declared illegal because it was an offshoot of the party.¹⁸¹ As a result, the RILU continued to be only indirectly represented in Scandinavia. There was plenty of sympathy for the organisation, as before, and it was possible to mobilise this in later years for the unity movement.

The setbacks suffered in the Balkans were still more obvious. In June 1923, there was a right-wing *putsch* in Bulgaria. The communist party refused to take part in the resistance to this, as it did not want to have anything to do with the government of the Peasants' Party, which had been in office until then. Then, in September, it attempted to mount a *putsch* of its own, suffering a bloody defeat.¹⁸² The General Workers' Trade Union Confederation of Bulgaria, one of the co-founders of the ITUC, was hit hard by these events, although it had already cut its formal connection with the communist party in June. Some of the constituent unions could be revived rapidly, but the government's measures of repression left a power vacuum in some areas, which reformist forces endeavoured to fill, although they were actually much weaker than the communists.¹⁸³

In the Romanian trade-union movement, the years 1922 and 1923 were characterised by a severe struggle between different tendencies. A central organisation had been founded in Sibiu (Hermannstadt) in 1922. This developed a certain amount of activity despite police obstruction, and it organised an emergency congress in September 1923, which had to decide on the union's international connections. It decided to join the IFTU. One reason for this was that in the course of the congress a number of communist delegates were prevented by the police from participating any further. It was openly admitted that the reason for joining the IFTU was to prevent the communists from continuing to be active within the framework of the united organisation, which was indeed their intention if they found they were in the minority. This resulted in a split. The supporters of the RILU organised themselves in February 1924 as the Unitary (Unified) Trade Union Council, which claimed to represent the majority of Romanian trade unionists (30,000, against the 20,000 who supported the IFTU). It also naturally proclaimed its readiness to restore unity to the whole movement, if necessary at the price of abandoning any connection with the RILU.¹⁸⁴

181 RGASPI 534/3/45/130; L. Nowack, 'Der 6. Gewerkschaftskongreß', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 5-6, May-June 1923, pp. 536-7 and *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 188-90.

182 Broué 1997, pp. 309-10 and 333-5.

183 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 173-5.

184 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 221-3; N. Vitesa, 'Der bevorstehende Kongreß der rumänischen Gewerkschaften' (SAPMO 1 6/3/435/35-8); *Presseberichte der IGB*, no. 40,

The Yugoslav trade-union movement too was at first dominated by the communists. After the end of the First World War, the different unions had joined together, but the repression of 1920 had led them to split apart again. Supporters of the RILU set up 'independent trade unions', as they called them, in various parts of the country, and these finally succeeded in joining together on an all-Yugoslav basis. A conference took place at the beginning of 1923. The Amsterdam-inclined trade unions also remained active, however, and factional struggles within the communist party did not help. The supporters of Amsterdam were finally able to form a new trade-union confederation, which affiliated to the IFTU.¹⁸⁵

The Balkans were still seen as a secure stronghold of communist trade unionism when the RILU was founded. It was true that the trade-union movement was in general weak there, because the region was predominantly agricultural. But in view of the revolutionary tradition in the Balkans, of which the RILU (and the Comintern) claimed to be the heirs, it was without any doubt felt as a severe reversal when Amsterdam managed to increase its influence significantly, even though this was helped by the high level of political repression.

In industrial Europe, on the other hand, the RILU had been able to consolidate its two trade-union centres which enjoyed influence on a mass scale, the CGTU in France and the MVS in Czechoslovakia. The CGTU finally and definitively joined the RILU at its November 1923 congress, held at Bourges, though not without internal conflict. An anarcho-syndicalist element split away from

25 September 1923 and no. 51, 11 December 1923; 'Korrespondenz aus Rumänien', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 5, September–October 1922, pp. 295–6; and 'Beitritt Rumäniens zum Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbund', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January–March 1924, pp. 17–18. The report recommending adherence to the IFTU and the address of greeting by the IFTU representative are printed in: *Neue Wege der Gewerkschaften Rumäniens*, Bucharest, 1923. It says on page 1 of that publication: 'As a result of the sabotage of the proceedings by several communist delegates during the first two days, on the third day the supporters of the modern trade union movement held the congress by themselves, in the same hall and with the same chairman. The report that follows was made then and the resolution that was proposed was agreed by 28,423 votes, hence by the majority of the union-organised workers of Romania'. According to the report's author, the main support for joining the IFTU came from Bukovina, in other words from the part of Romania which belonged previously to Austria. In his polemic against the communists, the main speaker was not above linking Moscow with Sofia, and describing the latter as the communist centre in the Balkans, which was a barely concealed attempt to mobilise traditional tensions between the Romanians and their Bulgarian neighbour.

185 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 26–7, and A. Sinkarev, 'KPlu i nezavisimye profsoiuzy v Iugoslavii (1921–1929)', *Sovetskoe slavianovedenie*, no. 3, 1980, pp. 25–36.

the confederation in reaction to this, but it did not succeed in gaining any great influence. The conflicts in Czechoslovakia were severer, but here too the MVS emerged as a stable organisation, alongside a number of independent unions, which were not members of the MVS but even so decided to affiliate to the RILU.¹⁸⁶

In its battle with the IFTU, the RILU had always insisted that its claim to be an international organisation was not just a rhetorical flourish, but a genuine statement of fact. Admittedly, it had not achieved a real breakthrough internationally. But it could point to numerous small organisations in various 'colonial and semi-colonial countries' which had joined it.¹⁸⁷ The decision to summon a Pan-Pacific Transport Workers' Conference at the end of June 1924 in Canton went back to the discussion at the Second RILU Congress about the creation of a 'pan-Pacific trade-union movement'. It offered a foretaste of the developments that were about to occur in China. It was possible to call the meeting at Canton, a Guomindang centre, because the Soviet Union and the Chinese communists had formed a close alliance with the Guomindang. This alliance allowed the communists to make tremendous progress in China, although at the Canton conference there was some criticism of the Comintern's bourgeois-nationalist partner. Apart from China, the other countries represented were Indonesia and the Philippines. No delegates appeared from India or Japan, despite the RILU's efforts. The conference, which lasted six days, engaged in a thorough examination of the situation and tasks of the transport workers' movement in the countries bordering on the Pacific, including their relationship with the nationalist movements of the region. It passed a manifesto and it set up a bureau made up of one representative each from India, China, Japan, the Philippines and Indonesia.¹⁸⁸ This body does not appear to have engaged in any traceable activities in the subsequent period, and it was rapidly rendered

186 See in detail McDermott 1988, pp. 102–40.

187 See the survey in *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 241–60.

188 Heller's report in *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß* 1924, pp. 306–11; Heller, 'Die Pazifik-Konferenz der Transportarbeiter in Kanton', *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 7–8, July–August 1924, pp. 52–4; and G. Wojtinski, 'Die erste Konferenz der Transportarbeiter im Stillen Ozeangebiet', *Inprekorr*, no. 116, 5 September 1924, pp. 1509–10. The Indonesian delegate Tan Malaka, who had also been a delegate to the Second Comintern Congress, gave some impressions of the conference and the shortlived activities of the bureau established there in his memoirs published posthumously as *From Jail to Jail*, edited by Helen Jarvi, vol. 1, Athens, 1991, pp. 103–15. See also Harry A. Poeze, *Tan Malaka. Strijde voor Indonesië's vrijheid. Levenloop van 1897 tot 1945*, The Hague, 1976, pp. 258–62. The Canton conference sent a greetings telegram to Zinoviev and Lozovsky. This was read out at the Fifth Comintern Congress, which was in session at that time (*Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß*

irrelevant by the developing situation. The succinct formulation in the Executive Bureau's report to the Fourth RILU Congress to the effect that this was 'only the first step'¹⁸⁹ was only a discreet way of saying that it had been unable to do anything at all. A major reason for this was that the Indonesian communist Tan Malaka, who had been given the job of heading the bureau, had to leave Canton a few months later for reasons of ill health. He did not even succeed in bringing out the planned organ of the bureau, *The Dawn*. Even so, this conference was the first step taken in Asia towards the establishment of the future Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat.

In view of this rather patchy development, the Executive Bureau took care not to repeat in front of the Third RILU Congress the triumphalist enumeration of membership figures with which it had entertained the previous congresses. At the first congress it had claimed 15 to 17 million, at the second 12 to 15 million, and as late as June 1923 the third session of the Central Council was informed that the RILU had 15 million members or organised supporters.¹⁹⁰ In the intervening period there had undeniably been a decline in the whole of the international trade-union movement, so that for example the IFTU had long since reduced its claimed membership figures.¹⁹¹ So the Executive Bureau was now careful to avoid giving a precise number, which would only have demonstrated that the RILU too had lost influence. It did continue to argue in its report, however, that whereas the RILU had supporters within the IFTU, the converse did not apply. It claimed the support of 50 percent of the IFTU's members in Germany, Italy and Poland, and 25 percent in Britain. If this were true, the reformists had only 10 million workers behind them, and only some of these, the Executive Bureau added, favoured the platform of the right wing of the IFTU.¹⁹² These were, however, highly dubious estimates, resting

der Kommunistischen Internationale 1924, vol. 2, p. 751). On the impact of the Canton conference on the workers' movements in Indonesia and China, see respectively McVey 1965, pp. 263–6 and Chesnaux 1965, pp. 350–1.

189 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927*, pp. 283–4. See also Heller's comment on the results of the Canton conference: 'It must be admitted that no real advance was achieved, mainly because the national basis in each individual country was not yet sufficiently firmly established' (*Protokoll der Vierten Session des Zentralrates der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Abgehalten in Moskau vom 9. bis 15. März 1926*, Berlin, 1926, p. 71).

190 *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrates* 1923, p. 12.

191 For the end of 1922 it claimed 18 million members, and in June 1924 16 million (see *Zweites statistisches Jahrbuch* 1924, p. 171, and *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1922–1923* 1924, p. 12).

192 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 266.

on the results of occasional votes and they were completely overshadowed by the collapse of organised KPD work in the ADGB. Moreover, the supporters of the RILU within IFTU unions were not organised separately, but continued to be bound by general trade-union discipline, so they could not be mobilised politically on its behalf.

The IFTU had a different angle of approach when analysing the membership figures. It concentrated exclusively on the organisations actually affiliated to the RILU. Its statisticians compared the end of 1921 with the end of 1924 and they concluded that the membership of the communist trade-union organisations had actually increased, from 7,000,000 to 7,300,000, which translated into an increase in their proportional share in the overall international trade-union movement from 15 percent to 20 percent, since total numbers had fallen in the meantime.¹⁹³ But the reason for this rise was the growth in the Russian trade-union movement. The shocks experienced by the world economy between 1921 and 1923 had not had any impact in Russia. On the contrary, the New Economic Policy had slowly brought about a restoration of economic life in the country, and this, combined with the state's promotion of the trade unions, led to the increase in numbers. In the IFTU's estimates, communist influence within its own affiliates was completely ignored. A realistic evaluation of the situation could only have been made by comparing the results of both angles of approach. Such a procedure would certainly have raised doubts about the optimistic view of its own influence that was spread by the RILU leadership. It was correct to point out that the IFTU, far from being genuinely international, was essentially restricted to Europe. But this changed nothing, as long as Europe remained the decisive terrain for the political battle. The RILU could point to an impressive number of contacts and members outside Europe,¹⁹⁴ but almost all of them were far from representing genuine mass organisations. One could, however, claim that there were opportunities for future development in this scenario.

At least the RILU had managed to retain and extend its organisational stability at the top. The Executive Bureau, it is true, had to admit that only five or six of its elected members were able to participate regularly in its activities.¹⁹⁵ But its burdens were lessened by the establishment of a Secretariat, consisting of Lozovsky, Nin and Kalnin.¹⁹⁶ The apparatus in Moscow, with its

193 *Viertes Jahrbuch IGB*, pp. 495–501.

194 According to the Executive Bureau's report (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 267), organisations from a total of 49 countries were associated together in the RILU.

195 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 261.

196 See above, chapter 5, section 5.

various political sections and organisational services, employed approximately 100 people.¹⁹⁷ The increased activities of the RILU in Western Europe made necessary a strengthening of its organisation in that area, in view of difficulties in communication, and particularly owing to the obstacles put in its way by the state authorities. More representatives were therefore sent out.

The MEB, for instance, was replenished. With its various sections – secretariat, information, organisation, press and technical services – it almost looked like a small-scale edition of the Executive Bureau.¹⁹⁸ The British Bureau, in contrast, continued to lack a clear organisational perspective. This only came into view with the creation of the Minority Movement in the course of 1924.¹⁹⁹ The MEB and the British Bureau were the first to be established. They were joined later by a bureau for the Latin countries. This was located in Paris, at the headquarters of the CGTU. One of its objectives was to influence the members of that union organisation, and it not only issued numerous RILU publications in French but also took care of the publication of RILU materials in the communist and CGTU press, in the form of IPC supplements to the newspapers of the appropriate individual trade unions within the CGTU. Another aim was to establish links with other Latin countries of Europe and also with Latin America. This second task was only accomplished with great difficulty.²⁰⁰

Thus the RILU was able to establish itself firmly as an organisation, while experiencing a certain decline in its political influence. In the spring of 1924, however, a political constellation began to develop which would once again pose the question of its further existence.

197 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, p. 262. The budget for 1924 to 1925 confirms this: it provided for 56 political, and 44 technical functionaries (RGASPI 534/8/29/7).

198 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 279–80. For the status of the MEB in the spring of 1923, see its report to the third Central Council session (RGASPI 534/2/18/32–70) and the summary presented by Kalnin to the Executive Bureau on 21 May 1923. According to that, it employed 31 people (RGASPI 534/3/45/112). Something of the atmosphere of the MEB's work in 1923 is conveyed by the memoirs of the Russian representative Izakov, who returned to Berlin in the spring, and was active there until his arrest and deportation from Germany in October (Izakov 1977, pp. 36–46).

199 *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 280–3.

200 See the survey of its activities in *Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 275–81, and Nin's report of 23 April 1924 to the Executive Bureau (RGASPI 534/3/78/59–60). The Latin bureau consisted of Monmousseau, Semard, Maurín and Repossi in June 1923. Its director was initially Renard, and from January 1924 onwards Semard (RGASPI 534/3/45/155 and 534/3/75/11).

The RILU between 1924 and 1927: In Danger of Dissolution for the Sake of International Trade Union Unity

1 The Trades Union Congress Brings About a Turn to the Left in the IFTU

At the TUC congress of September 1923, there was a lively discussion about a proposal, which had been made shortly before it convened, to invite a delegation of Russian trade unionists. This discussion was entirely overshadowed by the dramatic events which were expected in Germany, so that it was hardly even noticed in Moscow. The Welsh miners' leader A.J. Cook, supported by the communist delegate of the Boilermakers' Society, Harry Pollitt, raised the question of why the TUC had not responded to this request. The answer was that this had not been done for reasons of principle. The British Bureau of the RILU had made the request. But the TUC was not prepared to negotiate with such a body. If the Russians wanted to come, let them propose a visit themselves, and then they would be listened to.¹ Even the railwaymen's leader J.H. Thomas, who was on the extreme right of the General Council, supported this point of view, though perhaps because he thought that such an event as the appearance of the Russians would never happen anyway. What lay behind the proposal, however, became clear as the congress proceeded, when it was agreed that everything should be undertaken to restore normal political and economic relations with Russia. An agreement of this kind would secure many jobs, a point underlined by Robert Williams.² Actually, the TUC had been raising this demand for a long time. Analogous ideas lay behind the sending of the British Labour Delegation to Russia in 1920. The TUC formulated its demand for the restoration of relations with Russia in a long memorandum of 15 December 1921 to Lloyd George on the world economic situation.³ Pragmatic considerations of economic advantage were later combined with the interests of the left of the

1 *Report of Proceedings at the 55th. Annual Trades Union Congress* 1923, pp. 298–9.

2 *Report of Proceedings at the 55th. Annual Trades Union Congress* 1923, pp. 396–7.

3 Printed as *Memorandum on Unemployment and the International Situation, Reparations and Russia*, London, 1921.

TUC, which for political reasons hoped to find the way to the international unification of the workers' movement through conversations with the Russians. In Russia, however, no one really perceived the opportunities that were opening up in Britain.⁴

British initiatives of this type would inevitably have repercussions for the IFTU. An initial sign of this was Purcell's first appearance at the IFTU Executive in November 1923, although initially he was only there as a replacement for another British representative. It was, however, Labour's electoral victory of December 1923, leading to the formation of a minority Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald, with Liberal toleration, which really set this development in motion, because it had a knock-on effect for the balance of forces at the top of the TUC. All the members of the General Council who were appointed to MacDonald's cabinet were asked by him to give up their places on that body. These five people included leading TUC right-wingers such as Thomas and Margaret Bondfield, who chaired the General Council. In February 1924, their positions were taken over by left-wingers. Purcell, who became the new chairman of the TUC, could claim to occupy the presidency of the IFTU which had previously been held by Thomas. Thomas's office of Chairman of the International Committee of the General Council was taken over by the representative of the Building Trade Workers, George Hicks, who was also on the left.⁵

In Moscow, it was Lozovsky, always well informed about international developments, who immediately sensed the opportunities that were offered by this new situation. He approached the VTsSPS with the proposal that it start to correspond with the TUC. Chicherin, however, was opposed to the idea, because he feared that it would disrupt the new diplomatic opportunities which were in the offing. Lozovsky finally took the dispute to the Politbureau and to Zinoviev, the head of the Comintern. Despite this, his initiative ran aground for the moment.⁶ To get anywhere, direct contacts were needed.

4 For instance, there is no mention of the TUC debate in the section on Great Britain in the Executive Bureau's 1924 report (*Bericht des Vollzugsbüros* 1924, pp. 198–202).

5 Clegg 1985, vol. 2, p. 379; as Daniel Calhoun puts it: 'The whole look of the TUC leadership was different ... after the formation of the Labour government. Its spokesmen spoke a different sort of language. The resignations and replacements were not numerically startling, but in the General Council many members rarely spoke anyway; on matters of indifference to them many were willing to defer to the strongest voice, and a few assertive, emphatic personalities could thus seem to dominate proceedings' (Calhoun 1976, p. 47). According to the statutes of the TUC, the current chairman of the General Council was automatically the president of the next congress, and thus Purcell was president in 1925.

6 RGASPI 534/3/90/16.

The establishment of regular diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union had been part of Labour's election programme. Conversations between the two sides were slow to get going, in particular because British economic circles exerted pressure to secure the recognition by the Soviet side of former Russian debts. MacDonald was also faced with constant Conservative propaganda which sought to tar Labour with the brush of Bolshevism. In April 1924, the USSR decided to accelerate the negotiations by sending a delegation, which finally succeeded in August in negotiating a treaty. Although this treaty did not by any means settle the most important problems, it would, if ratified, have given a solid foundation for continued negotiations, and for the economic treaty the USSR wished to conclude.⁷

The Soviet side sent a clear signal with the composition of its delegation, which included a number of trade-union leaders, headed by Tomsy. The General Council responded to this, bringing its own weight to bear on the negotiations, so as to bring them to a positive conclusion as quickly as possible. The General Council's intentions were made very clear in the middle of May by a reception for the trade-union representatives in the Russian delegation.

While not denying the existence of fundamental political differences, all the speakers hastened to emphasise that they were agreed in their desire to co-operate. Tomsy was the only speaker from the Soviet delegation, and he showed particular tactical skill in appealing to the patriotism of the TUC representatives – Great Britain was making the running in everything now, he said – and to their professional pride – trade unionists were the most practical people in the whole world, he added. Everything should be done to build up a new economic connection by making loans to Russia. The Soviets had difficulties in dealing with British bankers, but they were certain that relations with the leaders of the British workers' movement could only get closer. The British representatives replied by voicing their enthusiasm over Tomsy's words, and they promised to provide all necessary support.⁸

This official meeting was followed by further informal contacts.⁹ The fact that the diplomatic negotiations were continued until they finally resulted in a

7 There are several studies of these negotiations. See, for example, Gabriel Gorodetsky, *The Precarious Truce: Anglo-Soviet Relations 1924–1927*, Cambridge, 1977, pp. 13–35.

8 The speeches were published as M. Tomsy, *Getting Together: Speeches delivered in Russia and England 1924–1925*, London, 1925, pp. 13–42. The other Russian participants were named by Tomsy as Kutuzov (textile worker), Shvernik (metalworker), and Zhitkov (railway worker). In addition, the delegation included Iarotsky as 'diplomatic attaché' (pp. 20–1). (See also Calhoun 1976, pp. 49–52).

9 The General Council pointed this out in its report to the September 1924 TUC congress:

treaty (in August 1924) opened the door to direct conversations between the British and the Soviet trade unions. In these talks, the issue was no longer simply the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries but the place of the Russian trade unions in the international trade-union movement.

The meetings he had in Britain had made a great impression on Tomsky, as the trade-union newspaper *Trud* reported when he returned to Moscow at the end of May to prepare for both the Comintern congress and the RILU congress.¹⁰ Further developments now strengthened the conviction Tomsky no doubt already possessed that it was possible to achieve international trade-union unity through the mediation of the TUC. From 2–6 June 1924, the annual congress of the IFTU took place in Vienna, preceded between 31 May and 2 June by a conference of the IFTU Executive with the representatives of the ITSS. Although these meetings dealt with a number of less important issues as well, there was no escaping the fact that the main question was that of the IFTU's relationship with the Russian trade unions, and the British representatives, led by Purcell, set the tone of the proceedings.¹¹

The earlier meeting with the ITS representatives was entirely dominated by the issue. First of all, however, they needed to confirm the decisions of the 9–10 November conference the previous year, which had regulated aspects of the relation between the ITSS and the IFTU, such as the admission of ITS representatives into the Executive, their participation in congresses with the right to speak, and regular joint meetings between the ITSS and the IFTU Executive. All this was non-controversial, so that the actual debates in fact turned around the question of the admission of the Russians into the ITSS. The same sides as

'Contact was maintained throughout the whole period of the Russian delegation's stay in this country' (*Report of Proceedings at the 56th Annual Trades Union Congress 1924*, p. 244). See also Pankratov 1972, p. 193.

- 10 Gorodetsky 1977, p. 90. According to Isaac Deutscher (1949, p. 402, note 1), Tomsky's enthusiasm went even further: 'On his return from Britain, Tomsky, greatly impressed by the high standard of living of the British and other western European workers, told one of his intimate friends, a former German vice-President of the Comintern (from whom the present writer heard the story): "I cannot see why your western European workers should be Communists. I do not see any possibility of revolution in the west"' (The friend in question was Heinrich Brandler).
- 11 On this point, see *Bericht über die Konferenz des Vorstandes des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes mit den Internationalen Berufssekretariaten vom 31. Mai bis 2. Juni in Wien*, Amsterdam, 1924, and *Bericht über den Dritten Ordentlichen Internationalen Gewerkschaftskongreß vom 2. bis 6. Juni 1924 in Wien*, Amsterdam, 1924.

before lined up against each other. When Oudegeest conceded that the Executive was ready in principle to cooperate with the Russians, Fimmen promptly interjected by asking why in that case had they been against the Berlin conference. Some speakers, such as Simon, or Dr. Maier from the Postal, Telegraph and Telephone International, tried to mediate between the two sides. A compromise formula was finally adopted, which recommended the November decisions as guidelines but expressly allowed exceptions to be made if they were agreed between the IFTU Executive and the ITS representatives in the IFTU Executive. The choice of the three ITS representatives was also marked by a spirit of compromise: Fimmen and Cook, two confirmed representatives of the left, were elected, and the third, Smit of the Commercial Employees' International, was not an entrenched rightist. The same picture resulted from the election of their replacements: the first two were Dißmann and Dr. Maier, and only the third, Brey from the Federation of General Factory Workers, could be regarded as a definite opponent of any kind of united front. Purcell refused to be a candidate, as the TUC was against any formal participation of the ITSS in the IFTU for reasons of principle. This was ironic, because it was precisely among the ITSS that he was to find his most important allies in the disputes of the years that followed.

The IFTU congress naturally had a broader agenda than the conference had had. It had to confirm not just the regulation of relations with the ITSS, but also the Executive's report on its own activities. Other items were the position of the IFTU in the international workers' movement, the struggle against war, and the fight for international social legislation and the Eight Hour Day. Here too, though, the question of the IFTU's relationship with the Russians came up repeatedly.

Right at the beginning of the congress, in the speech of thanks with which Purcell took over the presidency of the sessions (a position which guaranteed that he would later be elected as president of the IFTU itself), he pointed out that a way must be found to admit the Russians if the IFTU wanted to become an effective international organisation. Nevertheless, veritable confrontations took place during the very first item on the agenda, the annual report. The previous correspondence with the Russians and the Fimmen case both resurfaced. Fred Bramley, the secretary of the TUC, opened this discussion with a motion on behalf of the British delegation. He demanded that the passage in the report, which read that the IFTU had no reason to undertake any further steps in relation to the Russians, be removed, and that the negotiations with the Russians be continued. Fimmen seconded this, saying that despite the IFTU's constant assurances that it was in favour of unity in principle, it had not made any further progress in concrete terms since the previous year. Graßmann of the ADGB

made an angry response to the British proposal, quoting attacks made by the communist press against German trade-union leaders. The vehemence of his comments led member of the British delegation to interject with questions about the fate of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.¹² Even so, after a long tug-of-war, which took place behind the scenes during the discussions of the commission established to examine the Executive's annual report, a resolution was passed unanimously on the last day of the congress inviting the IFTU bureau to continue its endeavours to secure the admission of the Russian trade unions.

The other points on the agenda – international social legislation, the Eight Hour Day, the war danger, the position of the IFTU in the international workers' movement and the relationship between the IFTU and the ITSs – did not give rise to such sharp antagonisms. Nevertheless, there were constant attempts by the TUC representatives, supported by some of the ITS delegates, headed by Fimmen, to push the IFTU in the direction of a more resolutely anti-capitalist position. This was the case, for instance, with Oudegeest's speech on international social legislation, which Bramley criticised as advocating a liberal programme of the same kind as the International Labour Office also put forward. In England, he said, they were in the process of establishing a socialist programme, centred on the nationalisation of the means of production. Ben Tillett, who had not in fact been a strong opponent of the First World War while it was in progress, now emphatically stressed the significance of the struggle against war, which should be waged *before* a war broke out; afterwards, he added, it was too late, as experience had shown. That was the most important item on the agenda. The British alterations to the Executive's proposals were worked into the final resolutions of the congress. The only point where the TUC did not get its way was the inclusion of three representatives of the ITSs into the IFTU Executive, where its resistance to this step proved unsuccessful. Another signi-

12 These interruptions are not mentioned in the official minutes of the meeting, but they were recorded in the communist press. (For example, in August Enderle, 'Der Kongreß der Amsterdamer in Wien', *Inprekorr*, no. 61, 3 June 1924, pp. 725–6, and A. Losowski, 'Die russischen Verbände auf dem Kongreß der Amsterdamer Internationale', *Inprekorr*, no. 69, 17 June 1924, pp. 849–50). That such comments were actually made can be deduced from the fact that in another case corresponding corrections of the text of the official minutes were made in the Amsterdam trade-union newspapers. According to Enderle, there was a clash between the German and the British representatives at a sitting of the Executive just before the congress started. The British representative had 'quite openly' told the ADGB representative that 'he was not a representative of the German workers but of the German capitalist government'.

ficant point was the removal by the commission on the statutes of the provision by which the ITSS would have been obliged to include only organisations which belonged to the IFTU in their ranks.

The election of Purcell as president confirmed the dominant position of the TUC, which derived not just from its membership figures but also, to a still greater extent, from its financial contribution. Even so, all the previous members of the Executive (the vice-presidents and the secretaries) were re-elected, and all of them, apart from the British secretary J.W. Brown, belonged to the right wing of the IFTU. This was also true of the majority of the country representatives in the Committee (as the Executive had been renamed), which was now also attended by the three representatives of the Trade Secretariats. The list of representatives agreed at the discussion with the ITSS was confirmed at this committee. In his concluding address, Purcell expressed the opinion that they had made a great contribution towards establishing unity at the congress, adding that he hoped they would soon become a genuine international.

A considerable number of communist journalists were admitted to the congress, for the first time in the history of the IFTU, though this was perhaps also the first time they had tried to gain admission.¹³ The Vienna congress made a tremendous impression in Moscow. Lozovsky immediately composed a long analysis, in which he made a critical examination of its results. He underlined the importance of the left wing, referring to Purcell, Cook and Bramley by name as 'honest revolutionary proletarians'. But he criticised them both for their optimism in face of the secure right-wing majority in the IFTU, and for their expectation that the admission of the Russians would in a sense solve the RILU problem at the same time. Only a genuine unification of the two internationals could bring a solution. The final question he raised was whether the left wing would want to take the responsibility for a right-wing policy. 'And what now? Now we shall wait and see what happens. We are in no hurry'.¹⁴

13 'Symptomatic of the mood within the Amsterdam International was the fact, in itself not important, that a large number of representatives of the communist press were not only admitted to the congress but treated by the Amsterdam leaders with studied politeness. Two years ago, at the Rome congress, a representative of the communist press would not even have been admitted. In Vienna, on the contrary, they were treated as "dear comrades" who only needed to say the word to gain an interview with any Amsterdam leader you care to mention' (A.E. 'Der Wiener Kongreß der Amsterdamer', *Inprekorr*, no. 66, 11 June 1924, pp. 800–1). Another communist view of the Vienna IFTU congress was given by Victor Serge in 'Impresiones del Congreso de Viena', *La Batalla*, no. 60, 27 June 1924 and no. 61, 4 July 1924.

14 A. Losowski, 'Die russischen Verbände auf dem Kongreß der Amsterdamer Internationale',

The RILU could hardly have been very pleased about this development, because its very existence was at stake. If the Russian trade unions joined the IFTU, the RILU would have lost its chief base of support. This was clear from the remarks Lozovsky made about a detailed report made to the Executive Bureau by one of the Soviet observers in Vienna, Kalnin, a few days later. Kalnin had no good word to say about the Amsterdam Left, but his practical conclusion was to demand that the 'privileged position the Russian trade unions were now in' be exploited by taking the initiative. This hinted at a line of approach which differed from that employed by the RILU, and which the Russian trade-union leaders would soon adopt. After all, apart from his position in the RILU, Kalnin was also a leading official in the Russian mineworkers' trade union. In that capacity he had had long discussions with Cook, and he had gained a very good impression of him, whereas Lozovsky had his reservations.¹⁵

Tomsky and the VTsSPS were more positive than Kalnin about the Vienna congress. The VTsSPS Plenum was meeting at that time, and it immediately instructed its secretary, Dogadov, to send a telegram to Purcell, saying that the VTsSPS had noted with satisfaction that the TUC delegates had come out in favour of an association between Amsterdam and the Russian trade unions. 'The Plenum declares its complete readiness to agree to the proposal of the English trade unions, under the well-known conditions. Without a doubt, this proposal corresponds to the wishes of the best of the trade-union organised workers of the whole world'.¹⁶ Moreover, when the communist fraction of the

Inprekorr, no. 69, 17 June 1924, pp. 849–50; no. 70, 20 June 1924, pp. 891–3 and no. 75, 25 June 1924, pp. 921–2. This series of articles originally appeared in *Pravda* on 7–8 June and was then translated into German and published in several communist newspapers, including *Die Rote Fahne* (Carr 1972, vol. 3, p. 111). Lozovsky's call for the unification of the international trade-union movement met with sharp criticism, particularly in the KPD, and opposition to it was the starting-point for the KPD delegation's negative tactics at the Fifth Comintern Congress (see *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongress*, 1924, vol. 2, pp. 923 and 926).

15 RGASPI 534/3/79/77–82. Five days later, Smoliansky also reported on his impressions of the Vienna congress (RGASPI 534/3/79/99). He had been sent to Vienna as the correspondent of *Trud*, the organ of the VTsSPS (RGASPI 534/3/84). Kalnin wrote a report for the ECCI, which was read out at a sitting of the KPD's trade-union section on 25 July. The KPD observer, Enderle, also reported at the same meeting. He was more critical of the Amsterdam Left than Kalnin had been and he warned against taking any over-hasty steps, but he added these words: 'I am in agreement with their aims' (SAPMO I 2/708/10). Enderle's comments were an indication of the future concurrence between the German communist Right and the VTsSPS leadership on this question.

16 This statement was quoted by Tomsky in his report to the sixth Russian trade union congress (*Shestoi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов SSSR [11–18 noiabria 1924g.] Plenumy i*

VTsSPS met on 10 June, it declared that a breach had been made in the defences of the IFTU, and they should 'try to penetrate through this breach'. It was at this meeting too that the proposal to call a conference of Russian and British trade unions and to found a joint committee was first formulated.¹⁷

But the final decision over future policy was reserved to the forthcoming congress of the RILU, as the Executive Bureau pointed out when it had heard Kalnin's report,¹⁸ and, much more importantly, we must add, the Fifth Congress of the Comintern, which would precede it.

2 Moscow Takes the Road to Unity: The Fifth Comintern Congress and the Third RILU Congress

The Fifth Congress of the Communist International met from 17 June to 8 July 1924. It was conducted under the banner of the slogans of 'Leninism' and 'Bolshevisation', and it was dominated by Zinoviev's alliance with the new communist party leaderships of Germany and France. It also served to guarantee that the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev troika would continue to wield power in the Bolshevik Party. This grouping had pushed Trotsky to the sidelines after Lenin's death. He was considered to be in alliance with a so-called international right wing in the Comintern, consisting of Brandler and Thalheimer in the KPD, Souvarine, Rosmer and Monatte in the PCF, and the leaders of the Polish and Czechoslovak parties. The main spokesman of this group within the Comintern was alleged to be Radek. Politically speaking, the fifth congress was characterised by a move away from the united front policy proclaimed by the third and fourth Comintern congresses. It was replaced by a 'united front from below', in other words it broke with the policy of seeking alliances with 'reformist leaders'. The new policy was not without its contradictions, because its logical conclusion was a reversion to 'classical' ultra-leftism, for example an abandonment of any attempt to work within the reformist trade unions. As a result, and despite the generally agreed attack on Trotsky and Radek, this congress was plagued by contradictions and disputes within the new international majority, which were related above all to the question of trade-union unity.¹⁹

Sektsii, Moscow, 1925, p. 79). It is also printed in Tomskey 1925, p. 67, and in M. Tomskey, *Zum Problem der Einheit der Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, Bristol, 1926, p. 32.

17 Pankratov 1973, p. 193.

18 RGASPI 534/3/79/78.

19 On the significance of the Fifth Congress, see Broué 1997, pp. 372–3, 378 and 383–4 and Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 71–5.

Right at the beginning of the congress, Zinoviev pointed out the significance of the developments in Britain, at the level of both the diplomatic and economic relations which were being set in train and the communists' relationship with the TUC General Council: 'The chief task of the Communist International is now transferred to England in all fields'.²⁰ He let himself be carried away in the course of the congress by his optimistic expectations and imagined the possibility that astounding events would unfold there: 'Now in England we have a new chapter in the history of the workers' movement. We don't know exactly where the mass communist party will come from in England, whether through the door of Stewart and MacManus [two CPGB leaders, R.T.] or perhaps through a different door. And it is perfectly possible, comrades, that the mass communist party can come through yet another door'.²¹

These high expectations of the British left, which were only verbally restricted by the remark that one should have no illusions about its limitations, inevitably led to the following conclusion: the advances to the Russian trade unions forced by the TUC upon the IFTU must be taken up, and extended to secure international trade-union unity, in other words a merger between the IFTU and the RILU. There were of course strong objections to this course of action from within the camp of the congress majority. The main resistance came from the German delegation, which was led by Ruth Fischer. The Germans started by voicing their opposition behind the scenes, justifying their rejection of the perspective of unity in a sharply-worded memorandum: 'If we now propose international unification, after the communist parties of Bulgaria and Germany have suffered severe defeats, while the reformists can point to apparent successes in England and France, the workers will conclude that we have despaired of the possibility of revolutionising the trade unions in the foreseeable future ... For these reasons, the German delegation rejects this proposal'. These are the words of the German resolution, which was based on a 'left' perspective of impending revolutionary struggles.²²

20 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 1, p. 77. Pepper, the representative of the CPUSA, made a similar comment: 'The German October defeat and the victory of the English Labour Party, the Labour government in England, have transferred the centre of gravity of our present tasks from Germany to England. Comrade Zinoviev was completely correct to say that the new assault of the International should now be made in England and no longer on the Continent' (*Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 1, p. 304).

21 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 2, p. 912.

22 This document is preserved along with the other materials (particularly the minutes) of the German delegation to the fifth congress, in SAPMO I 6/3/136. It was characteristic of

Faced with this powerful resistance from the KPD, the Russian delegation gave way. It agreed that the question of international unity would be excluded from consideration from the outset.²³ The trade-union question was originally assigned the fifth place in the agenda, with Lozovsky giving the main report and Heckert seconding him. It was now moved much further back, so that it was not discussed until 5 and 7 July, shortly before the end of the congress on 8 July, which coincided with the start of the RILU congress.²⁴ In fact the (Russian-dominated) presidium had proposed to postpone the discussion on the two main reports on the trade-union question, and on Lozovsky's resolution, to the next session of the Enlarged ECCI Plenum, on the grounds that this would speed up the work of the congress. There was immediately furious opposition to this idea from the KPD, which was joined by the Italians, and then by the British – for completely opposite reasons – but the proposal was adopted by a large majority.²⁵

Lozovsky's report had two elements. One part of it was a renewed justification of the tactic of working in the reformist trade unions, already prescribed by previous Comintern congresses, in which context he was critical of recent developments in the KPD, and the other part was a general survey of the situation of the Amsterdam International and the organisations affiliated to it. He decided not to deal with the prospects for international unity because of the earlier decision to exclude this from the agenda. In conclusion he examined various organisational aspects of trade-union work and the tasks arising therefrom. Heckert then went on to comment on all these matters on the basis of German experience.

A short discussion did in fact take place after this, in spite of the decision that had been made to postpone all discussion to a later date. The supporters of the German ultra-left who were present indicated their complete disagreement with the policy of unity. Their spokesman was the Berlin clothing workers' leader Schumacher, who had formed part of the delegation of the Berlin trade-union commission which visited Russia in 1920. He had taken a leading part in

Ruth Fischer's style that she used the name 'Severing' in these internal discussions. This ultra-right social democrat had clearly made a considerable impression on her.

23 See Ruth Fischer's account, given to the German delegation at a meeting on 4 July.

24 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß* 1924, vol. 2, pp. 832–940. There is a summary of the debate in Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 572–8.

25 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß* 1924, vol. 2, pp. 828–9. Zinoviev noted that 'some of our German comrades are greatly agitated about this' and he emphatically asserted that it was not the purpose of the proposal to prevent a discussion, since this could just as well be conducted at the ECCI session.

the winter of 1923–4 in the movement to split away from the Free Trade Unions and to form independent revolutionary trade unions on the lines of the Union of Workers by Hand and Brain (UdHuK). He cleverly combined his advocacy of independent organisations – in which he occupied an isolated position within the KPD – with a defence of the RILU against the alleged plan to liquidate it in the course of a drive for trade union unity. He referred in this connection to the above-mentioned resolution passed by the German delegation.

A dispute on fundamental principles now began. Schumacher was, it is true, an almost isolated voice on the question of independent trade unions. The only one to put forward a similar position was Kucher, representing the United Labor Council, who criticised the TUEL and its work within the AFL and called on the RILU to establish closer relations with the IWW. On the question of international unity, however, he had some support. The representative of the Italian communist party, Bordiga, was opposed to the idea. On the other hand, Semard, from the PCF and the CGTU, said he stood foursquare behind the struggle for international unity. Zinoviev now decided to intervene. He did not just condemn 'Schumacherism', he also criticised the resolution passed by the German delegation, though he drew a clear distinction between the two lines of approach. Ruth Fischer emphatically distanced herself from Schumacher, though she declared her agreement with the reservations of the German delegation on the question of international unity, while regretting that their resolution, which had been an internal matter, had now been publicly revealed before the whole congress. After concluding statements from Schumacher (followed immediately by a declaration by the KPD delegation distancing itself from him), Heckert and Lozovsky, the trade-union commission discussed the further treatment of Lozovsky's theses. The result of its deliberations was announced on the final day of the congress. It decided to hand over the final editorial work to a commission, while the proposed section on international unity would need first to be discussed within the ECCI. The German delegation accepted this, declaring also that nothing more than tactical differences was involved here. They shared the opinion of the Russian party on the principles to be applied to the trade-union question. The congress's final act was to issue a separate declaration condemning the position represented by Schumacher.²⁶

26 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 2, pp. 1015–16. The complete text of the congress's resolution, with the additional declarations inserted by the trade-union commission, is printed in *Thesen und Resolutionen des v. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, vom 17. Juni bis 8. Juli 1924*, Hamburg, 1924, pp. 106–15.

When the ECCI met on 12 July (by now the RILU congress was already in session), Zinoviev was able to announce that they had been able to clear away most of their differences of opinion in the meantime. The unification of the two trade-union internationals was not a question of a 'united front from above'. It required, rather, a mass movement. Only a mass movement could bring about an international unity congress. The Russian trade unions had taken the initiative for tactical reasons, but they would only act under strict international control, as had already been the case in May 1923 when the Berlin transport workers' conference was convened. There could, he said, be no question of independent action by the Russian trade unions. 'The Russian trade unions are a part of the Profintern and they will carry out its tactics. They will not pursue any kind of independent policy'. An international commission should therefore be set up, he said, to exercise supervision over the moves towards unity. Bordiga alone continued to be intransigent over the issue. His was the solitary vote against the resolution.²⁷

The Third Congress of the RILU met between 8 and 22 July 1924. It had not originally been intended that a special item on international trade-union unity should be placed on the agenda. Lozovsky initially proposed that the proceedings would take the following form: after reports on the activities of the Executive Bureau and its future tasks, these items would be discussed: the Eight Hour Day, the ITSS, strike strategy, the situation in Great Britain and the colonial countries, and the Russian trade unions. Four other items would only be treated in commissions set up for the purpose: factory councils, the structure of the RILU, the agrarian question and the co-operatives.²⁸ Eventually, however, a separate agenda item on the question of international unity was added in any case. This happened because of an unexpected proposal brought in by Monmousseau at the beginning of the third sitting, on 10 July, two days before the ECCI was due to meet. Monmousseau's proposal was immediately accepted without any discussion.²⁹ This looked very much like a manoeuvre agreed between the Russians and the French (whose representative, Semard, had already demonstrated his support for the unity idea at the Comintern congress)³⁰ to take the Germans by surprise, in view of their resistance to

27 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 2, pp. 1031–2.

28 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale 1924*, pp. 17–18 (the end of the congress is mistakenly dated 21 July in the subtitle to these minutes). There is a summary of the proceedings in Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 578–86. The congress documents are preserved in the RILU archive (RGASPI 534/1/28–63).

29 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale 1924*, p. 39.

30 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß 1924*, vol. 2, pp. 890–5.

unity. This, at any rate, was the impression that prevailed among the German delegation to the Comintern congress when they discussed the matter on 14 July. Their first reaction was to consider whether the German delegation to the RILU congress should make a protest against the 'Monmousseau incident'. Ruth Fischer was especially disappointed by the behaviour of the French.³¹ Later on, however, they decided against this. In any case, the international issue was already on the table. Indeed, it was the dominant question at the congress, as could be seen from several of the speeches of greeting.³²

The first day was taken up with introductory tasks such as the establishment of the agenda, the election of the presidium and the appointment of commissions, followed by the delivery of greetings to the congress. The report of the Executive Bureau was delivered on the second day.³³ After that, on the third day, discussions started with Monmousseau's 'coup' which was mentioned earlier, and went on to consider perspectives for the future. As Carr has pointed out, the question of trade-union unity was examined on three levels: on the national level, the ITS level, and finally 'the top level', the level of relations between the RILU and the IFTU.³⁴

The national level was dealt with in Lozovsky's report on the future tasks of the movement. He delivered a fierce polemic against any tendency to withdraw from the trade unions. Instead he favoured revolutionising them by engaging in a group of tactical initiatives, namely the inclusion of unorganised workers, activity among women and young people, the utilisation of the factory councils and the struggle against all forms of national oppression and for the rights of immigrants. Needless to say, none of the 32 delegates who spoke in the debate questioned the principle of trade-union unity. This even applies to the two representatives of independent organisations (Kucher of the United

31 SAPMO 16/3/136.

32 This applies particularly to Dogadov – who spoke for the VTsSPS – and Bukharin – who spoke for the Comintern, and stressed the significance of the development of a left wing in the IFTU and of the initiative it had taken at the Vienna congress. See *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 18–21.

33 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 9–38 and 318. Schumacher, who was beginning to make a name for himself as a 'left opposition' at the congress, was the only person to criticise the report. The Executive Bureau, he said, was placing the existence of the RILU in question, especially by its behaviour in Finland. No one else wished to speak, because all the other delegates were more interested in discussing the RILU's future work, and a commission was set up to polish the resolution proposed by Lozovsky approving the work of the Executive Bureau.

34 Carr 1972, vol. 3, p. 579.

Labor Council and a delegate from the NAS). They spoke only about lower-level questions of trade-union work. It was clear that unity was no longer a disputed issue.³⁵ (The NAS representative, however, had to put up with a frontal attack at the congress from a representative of the communist fraction within the reformist trade-union federation of the Netherlands). Only the French saw trade-union unity as one of the main causes for which they were fighting. In general, the contributions of the speakers to the debate were characterised by a concern to relate individual national experiences and central aspects of national trade-union work to the principles laid down by Lozovsky. Heckert had a reason for stressing the severity of the German defeat and its international significance: he wanted to place a question-mark over Lozovsky's optimistic perspective, which was related above all to Britain, but also to France. Even so, no objection was made to handing over Lozovsky's theses to a commission to be given a final polish, and on the final day of the congress they were adopted unanimously.³⁶

The next item on the agenda – the Eight Hour Day – was introduced by Heckert, whose remarks were supplemented by Tom Mann.³⁷ This theme was by no means controversial, and it was doubtless a central question for any trade-union congress, particularly since the events of 1923 had been followed by a wide-ranging offensive against this achievement of 1918–19, which had not been effectively opposed by Amsterdam. After two speeches, it was decided that any further discussions should take place in a commission. The latter body later produced a resolution which underlined the central significance of reducing the hours of labour and presented a detailed catalogue of demands for the RILU to implement.³⁸

35 In any case, these independent unions were all communist in orientation. There was no longer any kind of syndicalist opposition at the third congress. Before it convened, the anarcho-syndicalists in the CGTU had pressed the CGTU leadership to use the opportunity of the RILU congress to raise questions about the fate of the political prisoners on the Solovietzky Isles, who mostly came from the various socialist and anarchist opposition groups in the Soviet Union. ('La C.G.T.U. et les assassinats de Solovetzki', *Le Libéraire*, 16 April 1924). It was not possible to find out whether this had any effect, or indeed whether the French delegation had even fulfilled its promise to intervene with the authorities.

36 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 39–117, 317–18 and 339–51.

37 Tom Mann wrote a notebook about his stay in Russia in 1924 (MRC MSS 334/8/19–334) and sent letters to his wife about it (MRC MSS 334/3/6/13–36).

38 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 117–38, 248 and 352–4.

The International Trade Secretariats then came up for discussion. This question was of great significance for the structure of the RILU as an organisation. The main reports were delivered by Semard and Iuzefovich, supplemented by the KPD representative Steffen, who spoke about the IPCs. On this question a clear divergence of interests became apparent. Steffen summarised it as follows: 'For the Russian comrades, the united front with the Amsterdamers is the main objective, whereas in Germany it is to revolutionise the workers and win them over to the political struggle'. Semard and Iuzefovich (particularly the latter) justified the RILU's attempts to influence the Trade Secretariats, and gave a detailed account of what had happened so far, concentrating especially on the transport workers' conference. Iuzefovich explained the reason for seeking the admission of the Russian trade unions to the ITSS. Steffen pointed out that the 'united front from above' had been rejected, yet the correspondence taking place was between the Russians and the Trade Secretariats alone. He stressed the need to strengthen the IPCs. In no circumstances should they be dissolved. Vaksov and Krol' replied, recounting their own experiences. Hardy complained that the existing IPCs were not yet capable of bringing together all the forces that did not belong to Amsterdam and representing them internationally, something the ITSS would never be able to do. In their closing speeches, Iuzefovich and Semard contradicted Steffen, saying that he had disregarded the struggle for international unity, although they conceded verbally that unity would have to be achieved both from above and below.³⁹

The discussion that followed about the situation in Britain, which was introduced by Tom Mann and Kalnin, had the main purpose of indicating the big transformation in the trade-union movement which had resulted from the formation of a 'left wing' and of justifying the policy of unity they were pursuing towards it. Lozovsky, on the other hand, placed particular stress on the need to distinguish the direct adherents of the RILU from this 'left wing'. The RILU's adherents in Britain had now acquired the name 'Minority Movement'. The next task of the RILU in Britain would be to unite the various minority movements together nationally (this would in fact happen a month later, in August). A resolution to that effect was worked out in the commission, the only contrary vote coming from the KPD representative, no doubt because the 'left wing' element of the TUC had not been criticised sharply enough.⁴⁰

39 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 139–69, 330–1 and 356–7.

40 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 171–200, 329–30 and 383–6.

Strike strategy, on the other hand, produced a greater amount of discussion. Four delegates reported on this question: Monmousseau, Heckert, Bill Dunne (from the United States), and finally Lozovsky. They sought to provide a general picture of the strike movements of recent years by giving numerous examples. It should be possible, they thought, to discover precise rules which would allow strikes to be led in future in the same way as military strategists conduct a war. It was easy to perceive the ironic tone of the Irish delegate Jim Larkin when he started the discussion by saying that 'in the course of four hours, four learned and capable experts on strike strategy, who have been studying this question for a very long time, have presented a great amount of documentation'. The Canadian Tim Buck expressed his fundamental doubt as to whether one could 'manoeuvre during a strike according to the rules of military strategy'. It was pointed out that experiences differed widely in each individual country. The final resolution, adopted unanimously, therefore abandoned the idea of setting up rules or strategies of general validity. It stressed instead that this question would continue to be discussed 'with the greatest seriousness' and that an extensive collection of information on the subject would be made.⁴¹

The next few days of the congress were occupied with reports from some of the commissions, greetings from representatives of the communist women's conference and a report by Dogadov giving information on the current situation in the Russian trade-union movement.⁴² Finally, on 19 July, the congress arrived at the item of the agenda which was potentially the most damaging threat to the internal cohesion of the RILU. Monmousseau gave the main report on the 'struggle for the unity of the international trade-union movement'. The main aim here was to explain the attitude of the RILU to the offer made to the Russian trade unions at the Vienna congress of the IFTU. He said that only an international unity congress could put in train a fusion between the two internationals. The IFTU's offer was a 'surrogate for unity'. 'The Russian trade unions will not go to Amsterdam. They will remain in the Red International of Labour Unions just like the CGTU and all the other comradely unions in the revolutionary movement. But once all the preparatory work has been done and the masses feel that unity is a necessity, the Russian trade unions, which are attached to the RILU, together with the other delegates at our congress, will invite it to

41 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 201–48, 320 and 357–8.

42 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 248–65.

approach the Amsterdam International with a declaration that we desire, not odd scraps of unity, but the achievement of a genuine unity on an international scale'.

The other *rapporteur*, Tomsy, started his speech by declaring that there was 'not even the shadow of a difference of opinion' between Monmousseau and himself, in other words the Russian trade unions. But his comments were in fact a plea that the Russian trade unions be permitted to engage in conversations with Amsterdam. It is true that he repeatedly stated that 'the Russian trade unions have not taken a single step without the approval of the RILU and they will not do so in the future'. At the same time, however, he referred back to the time of the foundation of the ITUC together with Purcell, Williams and, not least, the Italians, whose 'true face' they had of course been aware of all along. 'Consciously or unconsciously, voluntarily or involuntarily, they performed great things, and in the future we propose to exploit the reformists once again'. The logical conclusion of this in the situation that had now arisen was formulated by him in a question, the second half of which was purely rhetorical: 'Should the Russian trade unions abandon the negotiations, should any other part of our RILU abandon negotiations with Amsterdam? Until now we have not refused to make use of any opportunity or any possibility of pursuing our line on this, nor do we have the right to refuse to do so'.⁴³

Tomsy's words set off an uproar. Nin proposed that the plenary sitting be ended there and then, and the discussion continued in a commission.⁴⁴ (This intervention was removed from the published version of the minutes). As Nin later recalled, a discussion was in fact held within a narrower group, consisting of the Soviet and French delegations and some representatives of other countries, at which Tomsy was sharply assailed. He defended himself by saying that he had been mistranslated, a claim that was emphatically contested by Nin, who had learned perfect Russian over the years. The final result was that Tomsy was forced to revise his report by introducing critical remarks about the left wing in the IFTU and placing more stress on the role of the RILU. The Russian trade unions now signified their agreement to a general congress resolution.⁴⁵

43 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 265–82 (the quotations are on pp. 271 and 281).

44 RGASPI 534/1/39/45.

45 This follows Nin's account in Nin 1978, pp. 139–40. There are no minutes of the discussion in the RILU archive. Tomsy's handwritten corrections were, however, entered afterwards on the typescript of his speech (RGASPI 534/1/39/29–43).

After a one-day interruption, which was clearly caused by this controversy, the congress immediately resumed its work by passing a resolution on international unity. The chief element in this was the proposal to call an international unity congress at which the RILU and the IFTU would be represented in proportion to their size. It was nevertheless sufficiently broadly formulated to allow the Russian trade unions to take the initiative. The possibility of approaching the TUC through 'representatives of the RILU' was explicitly raised. No opportunity of negotiating with Amsterdam was to be ignored, although any negotiations had to be agreed to by the leadership of the RILU. A 17-strong international unity commission was to be set up, to work out, under the direction of the RILU, how the resolution was to be put into effect. The only person to vote against the resolution was Schumacher, who made a personal declaration that as long as capitalism existed he was in principle against liquidating the RILU. This allowed Lozovsky to make the rejoinder that he was just as much in principle in favour of trade-union unity. When it came to a vote, Schumacher was supported only by a delegate from the NAS. The unity commission itself was set up at the same sitting.⁴⁶

The final task of the day, and the last major point on the agenda, was to examine the colonial question. Heller presented a full report on this. He noted that there had been a decline in spontaneous strike movements since the period of the first two congresses. This had happened because no stable trade-union organisations yet existed, and it was necessary to set to work to construct these. The construction of trade-union federations was an urgent task for the RILU because there were signs that Amsterdam was now extending its tentacles towards the colonial countries. He again emphasised how necessary it was to combine the trade unions of Europe with those of the East, in other words the unions of the colonial powers with those of the colonies. A number of delegates, mainly from colonial countries, including the future Ho Chi Minh, supplemented his remarks. Heller then gave the congress some information on the Pan-Pacific Conference of Transport Workers in Canton, which in his view constituted a great breakthrough for the RILU.⁴⁷

The final day of the congress was mainly occupied by the presentation of a large number of commission reports which were still outstanding, dealing mainly with questions of organisation in a wide range of countries. The audit

46 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 282–8 and 351–2.

47 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 291–311.

commission, which had examined the accounts, had to report that the previous decision on the payment of contributions by the communist minorities in IFTU unions had hardly been complied with, and it again presented a schedule of expected payments. Last of all came the elections. A larger Executive Bureau with 25 members and 34 candidates was elected. The members were: Lozovsky, Lepse, Dogadov, Mel'nichansky, and Kalnin (USSR); Heckert and Geschke (Germany), Monmousseau and Jacob (France), Mann and Allison (Great Britain), Josef Hais and F. Sejpka (Czechoslovakia), Foster and Dunne (USA), Buck (Canada), Penelón (Latin America), Redens (Poland), Nin (Spain), Germanetto (Italy), Dimitrov (Bulgaria), Lazar (Yugoslavia), Lumivuokko (Finland), Samaoen (Indonesia) and Tani (Japan). Lozovsky concluded the congress with a short address. It had been a congress conducted under the banner of unity, he said. They had refused to replace this slogan, which had already been put forward previously. There was no other choice. He was hopeful that it would soon be possible to bring about international unity.⁴⁸

It had thus been possible to win over the RILU for the course towards an international unity congress which had already been put forward by the Fifth Comintern Congress. The resistance of the KPD delegation was not so openly voiced here as it had been at the Fifth Congress. After the 12 July compromise at the ECCI Plenum, it had accepted this perspective in principle, if it was combined with a broad campaign. Schumacher alone rejected the slogan of unity. Behind the scenes, of course, the KPD delegation fought hard, particularly with Tomsky, over the precise wording of the statement.⁴⁹ But it was only in appearance that an agreed and unambiguous line had been established. The various participants in the debate – ranging from the Comintern leadership around Zinoviev at one end through Lozovsky to the Russian trade unions headed by Tomsky at the other end – continued to have different expectations in private, in line with the positions they had taken up. Whereas for Zinoviev the RILU was an instrument to be utilised by the Comintern, Lozovsky had a direct interest in maintaining its independence. He owed his position in the Soviet leadership to its existence. The Russian trade unions, finally, might hope to gain an independent international position themselves if the RILU disappeared.

Even those people who unconditionally supported the further existence of the RILU because of its symbolic significance had to concede that the original decision to set it up had been extremely problematic. For instance, the memor-

48 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale 1924*, pp. 334–8.

49 Two letters to the KPD, probably composed by Geschke, dated 18 and 29 July, make this clear (SAPMO I 6/3/137/65–8 and 73–4).

andum of the German delegation to the Fifth Comintern Congress included this statement: 'Perhaps it would have been better if from the very beginning the tactic of cell-building had been conducted within the internationally unified trade union movement'.⁵⁰ And Zinoviev continued that line of thought when he related that the RILU had been founded 'at a moment when it seemed that we would be able to break through the enemy front in a frontal attack and quickly conquer the trade unions'. Soon afterwards, he added, the movement ebbed away, and social democracy was able to consolidate itself, even in the trade-union sphere.⁵¹

When the balance of the RILU's organisational achievements was summed up at this time, the result was by no means positive. Rosmer, who took part in both congresses as an observer, wrote in a letter to Monatte that the RILU was not a genuine international because you could not make an international out of minorities. You needed organisations. The RILU had now completed its task and would not be able to grow any further. It had even lost the support of many syndicalist centres.⁵² Although it could be argued that membership calculations were difficult to make in some individual cases, it was no accident that for the first time no membership figures were revealed at this congress, either in the written report of the Executive Bureau or in the speech Lozovsky gave in introducing this report. Moreover, this time the report of the mandate commission was extremely meagre. It did not itemise the mandates separately according to the minorities or organisations they represented. There were, it is true, 112 more delegates at this congress than the previous one – a total of 311 – but this was a result of the extraordinarily high number of Russian delegates (21 with full voting rights and 98 with a consultative voice) and also of the addition of 14 delegates from the IPCs, which now had independent representation.⁵³

In view of this situation, the perspective of getting rid of the RILU developed almost inevitably in the minds of the Russian trade-union leadership, embodied first and foremost in Tomsy. It was an open secret at this congress that the Russian trade unions aimed to secure entry into the IFTU, justifying this with reference to the left wing which was now present in that organisation, and that this would automatically bring with it the liquidation of the RILU, as Rosmer suggested in the letter quoted above. Lozovsky, on the other hand, was uncompromisingly opposed to such a move. The call for a joint congress of both

50 SAPMO I 6/3/136/52.

51 *Protokoll. Fünfter Kongreß* 1924, vol. 2, pp. 911–12.

52 *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, p. 391.

53 *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongreß der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1924, pp. 289–90.

internationals could be said to have emerged from a compromise between the two positions, although Rosmer at least had no illusions about the prospect that such a congress could ever get off the ground.⁵⁴

3 The Anglo-Russian Committee and the International Movement for Trade-Union Unity

Purcell was the new president of the IFTU, but he had Oudegeest to deal with, and Oudegeest made no secret of his opposition to the communists. One might perhaps leave the RILU out of the picture, but one could at least, said Oudegeest, set very far-reaching requirements for the Russians to fulfil – requirements which were unacceptable in practice.⁵⁵ Indeed, the negotiations of the next few months were characterised by an exchange of letters between the IFTU and the VTsSPS in which both sides were increasingly at cross-purposes with one another. The correspondence was opened by the IFTU, when, after allowing the significant delay of six weeks after the Vienna congress, it officially sent the resolution passed there to the Russian trade unions and proposed a meeting. The Russian trade unions gave an evasive answer. It was wrong to set the conditions mentioned in the letter, they said. These conditions required the Russians to accept in advance the programme and statutes of the IFTU, in which, as was well known, they had had no involvement. The correspondence continued month after month, always delayed by the fact that the decision-making bodies in each case had first to agree on an authoritative answer before a reply was made. The Russians initially called for an international conference, but then they lowered their sights, saying that what they wanted was a meeting, exactly the same as had been proposed by the IFTU. The IFTU bureau finally referred the Russians to the meeting of the IFTU committee which had been called for 5 February 1925.⁵⁶

54 *Syndicalisme révolutionnaire et communisme* 1968, pp. 391–2. See also the letter from the CGTU representative Herclot to Rosmer written six months later, and printed on pp. 418–23 of that collection. Tomsy, said Herclot, had so far been held back with great difficulty. At the next opportunity, when the proposal of a unity conference was rejected by Amsterdam, he would again start to make propaganda for the direct affiliation of the Russian trade unions to the IFTU.

55 See, for example, his article 'Einige Betrachtungen zum Wiener Kongreß', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 3, July–September 1924, pp. 219–24.

56 The letters are dated 16 July, 26 July, 9 August, 11 September, 23 October, 31 October, 5 December and 23 December 1924 and 29 January 1925. They were printed in several

This correspondence was conducted evasively by both sides. The Russians were quite clearly trapped in their responses by the rigidity of the position taken up by the third RILU congress, and they did not feel able to bring this into line with the idea of a joint meeting which they favoured. The IFTU bureau, for its part, showed by the brevity of its letters that it approached the whole question with extreme unwillingness. This can be seen from a confidential letter of 6 November 1924 from Oudegeest to Jouhaux, the Vice-President of the IFTU and without doubt the most prominent spokesman of the IFTU right. The text of the letter only became known later. It was disclosed by the British IFTU secretary Brown at the next IFTU congress, in 1927, and it caused a considerable uproar there.⁵⁷ In the letter, to which a Russian letter of 27 October 1924 was attached, Oudegeest commented that the Russian request seemed genuine and the two of them would therefore need to go over to the offensive. They should hold a private meeting before the next official sitting of the IFTU Bureau so as to reach an agreement in the absence of the English.

Whatever course was taken by these 'private' meetings within the IFTU (until now the archives have not revealed any further information about this, though there can be no doubt that they took place), a right-wing view certainly crystallised out, aimed at setting conditions the Russians would find unacceptable. As a result, two fixed and opposing factions confronted each other at the Committee's 5 February 1925 meeting.

In the intervening period, contacts between British and Russian trade unionists had become more frequent. The TUC and the VTsSPS sent each other invitations at the end of July, almost simultaneously. After the decisive intervention of prominent left-wingers, headed by Purcell, had prevented the collapse of the Soviet-British negotiations, something which indubitably raised their estimation in Moscow's eyes, a five-strong delegation led by Tomskey travelled to the TUC congress in Hull a month later. Oudegeest delivered an address, greeting the congress in the name of the IFTU, but this was directly followed by Tom-

places at the time. See Tomskey 1926, pp. 33–9 and *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 3, July–September 1924, pp. 248–50, no. 4, October–December 1924, pp. 329–32, and no. 1, January–March 1925, pp. 11–13. See also Calhoun 1976, pp. 77–9 and 110–12, and Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 585 and 588–9.

57 *Protokoll des IV. Ordentlichen Kongresses des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes. Abgehalten im Grand Palais, Paris, vom 1. bis 6. August 1927*, Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 56–60, 65, 85–93 and 285–6. Brown spoke of a politics of downright intrigues and cabals at the organisation and in addition to the letter presented in detail here he adduced another example, a letter from the International Labour Office to Oudegeest explicitly describing ways in which he himself could be circumvented. See on this subject Calhoun 1976, pp. 79–80.

sky's speech, which was an effective plea for trade-union unity, to which the delegates responded with enthusiastic agreement. After this impressive Russian intervention, the General Council arranged to send its own delegation to the Soviet Union.⁵⁸

This consisted of seven of its members (including Purcell, Tillett and Bramley) and three specialist advisers. It arrived in Russia in the middle of November, a month later than originally envisaged, because it was delayed by the British elections. This delay also led to the postponement of the Sixth Congress of the Russian trade unions, a gesture which indicated the great interest there was on the Soviet side. The TUC delegation did not limit its activities to appearing at the Sixth Congress (represented by the three General Council members just mentioned). It went on to make an extensive fact-finding tour, which took it as far as Georgia. In spite of the triumphal reception, which was an expression of the feeling that this was a decisive break in the wall of isolation that surrounded Russia, and the natural desire of the Russians to show off only what they wanted to show, the delegation did not let itself simply be taken in by all this, despite its sympathies. Having arrived back in London on 19 December, it presented an informative report, which also had numerous critical aspects. But its overall evaluation of what had so far been achieved in the country was positive. The report was of great interest internationally and it was widely circulated, as is shown by the large number of translations.⁵⁹

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- 58 *Report of Proceedings at the 56th Annual Trades Union Congress* 1924, pp. 395–400, and Calhoun 1976, pp. 80–7. Walter Citrine, who was later to be General Secretary of the TUC (from 1926) and president of the IFTU (from 1928), has presented a lively picture of the 'tumultuous welcome' given to the Russians at the 1924 congress (Citrine 1964, pp. 89–90).
- 59 *Report of Proceedings at the 56th Annual Trades Union Congress* 1924, pp. 94–106. The speeches of the British trade unionists at the Sixth Congress of Russian trade unions are printed in *Shestoi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1924, pp. 49–56, and in *Russia. The Official Report of the British Trades Union Delegation to Russia and Caucasia, November and December 1924*, London, 1925 (see the remarks in *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. 9, 1993, edited by J.M. Bellamy and J. Saville, London, pp. 107–13). The German translation is *Rußland. Offizieller Bericht der englischen Gewerkschaftsdelegation nach Rußland und dem Kaukasus im November und Dezember 1924*, Berlin, 1925. The report was naturally subjected to severe criticism by the Social Democrats. Two examples of this are: Friedrich Adler, *Der Bericht der britischen Gewerkschaftsdelegation über Rußland*, Prague, 1925 and *Die englische Gewerkschaftsdelegation und Georgien*, edited by the Foreign Bureau of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Georgia, Paris, 1925. The minutes of the reception committee for the delegation give instructive insights into the preparatory work on the Russian side. For example, the Soviet embassies responsible for the countries through which the delegation passed were given detailed information, and the trade union organs in the

While the delegation was still in Moscow, and before it set off on its journey through the country, it had an official exchange of views with the Russian trade-union leadership. This led to the conclusion of an agreement, proposed by the Russians, which was at first somewhat vague, that at the next opportunity they would set up a joint Anglo-Russian committee for the establishment of trade-union unity.⁶⁰ The next day a joint sitting of the ECCI Presidium and the Executive Bureau of the RILU approved this proposal. Zinoviev also reported at that meeting about a conversation between Stalin, Bukharin, himself and Purcell, at which Purcell presented the standpoint of the left wing in the General Council.⁶¹

These events pretty well pushed the RILU to the verge of collapse, although Calhoun's judgement on the situation is certainly too extreme. In his view: 'Profintern hardly existed at all over the next four years except in the skeleton form of its small Executive bureau.'⁶² It is true that there was no congress for the next four years (which was a breach of the statutes) and the Central Council also met only once during this period, but numerous questions of international trade-union politics were dealt with by the joint action committee of the Comintern and the RILU. The first issues treated in the summer and autumn of 1924 mainly involved rearguard skirmishes with the KPD's representatives over the question of international unity. They were eventually compelled to give up their long-lasting resistance to this in view of the intensive contacts now being developed with the British. The joint action committee, however, seems to have had its activities unceremoniously cut short at the time of the Fifth ECCI Plenum (21 March to 6 April 1925), since there are no more minutes of its meetings to be found in the RILU archive. This decision was chiefly an expression of the abandonment at this time of the fiction that there were

towns between Riga and Moscow, where the delegation's train halted, were instructed to organise greeting demonstrations on the station platforms. Moreover, a better restaurant car was attached to the train than was customary (GARF 5451/131a/10).

60 The statements of intent made by Tomskey and Bramley are preserved in the TUC archive (MRC MSS 292/910.3).

61 RGASPI 534/3/83/1-5. Zinoviev was particularly impressed by this encounter with Purcell: 'The general impression was very good. If we compare Purcell with Fimmen the former comes out more favourably. He is very genuine and honest. He answered all our questions in an open way'. For Zinoviev, this was a further demonstration 'that in England, history is bringing about an entirely new form of development of communism, never seen before, and it will perhaps also bring about the proletarian revolution. The English are so thoroughly organised that there will be many unexpected developments, and indeed they will happen in the foreseeable future'.

62 Calhoun 1976, p. 76.

two independent internationals of equal status existing side by side, which needed to negotiate continuously to arrive at a common line of approach.⁶³ But the Committee of 17, set up as the directing organ of the international unity movement, also left very few traces of its existence during the autumn of 1924.⁶⁴ When the Executive Bureau's report on its activities was presented to the Fourth World Congress of the RILU in 1928, it was not even thought necessary to mention either of these bodies, even though they had been brought into existence by the decisions of a RILU congress.

The RILU thus had little influence on the course of events. All Lozovsky could do was give it greater weight by taking his own initiatives. He kept a vigilant watch on the Russo-British *rapprochement*. When, for example, in the middle of September, the organ of the Russian trade unions published the proposed agenda for the approaching congress, he immediately wrote to Manuil'sky at the Comintern from his hospital bed to complain about it. It contained, he said, neither an item on the international trade-union movement centred on the Third RILU Congress – which would require that he himself give a report, on the model of previous congresses – nor were any other speeches of greeting envisaged than those from the British.⁶⁵ He did in fact get the opportunity to deliver a report in November, towards the end of the Sixth Congress, a week after it began, when the British representatives, having delivered their greetings, were already journeying through the Soviet Union. His report did not provoke much discussion, and the discussions that did take place were interrupted by speeches greeting the congress by representatives of the KPD, the CGTU, the MVS and the Minority Movement.⁶⁶

63 The minutes of the action committee are in RGASPI 534/3/86. Its last documented sitting took place on 5 March 1925.

64 The RILU archive contains the minutes of only one sitting, on 12 September, in Berlin, which was mainly devoted to drawing the lessons from the TUC congress in Hull (RGASPI 534/3/87). A further sitting took place in November, presumably in connection with the congress of the Russian trade unions, as appears from a letter sent by a KPD representative to Germany (SAPMO I 6/3/138/135–6). After that the committee appears to have fallen into abeyance. It also ceased to be a theme of discussion at the Executive Bureau's meetings.

65 RGASPI 534/3/90/131.

66 *Shestoi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов* 1924, pp. 375–417. Tomskey in his own report had already informed the congress in detail about his conversations with the TUC (pp. 78–84 and 178–80). Some contributors to the discussion after both the reports had critical remarks to make about the possibility of arriving at any agreement with the Amsterdam 'class traitors', although they did not oppose the VTsSPS's policy in general (pp. 118–19, 132–

Lozovsky's attitude by no means indicated a direct rejection of any possible agreement with the left Amsterdamers. His objection was simply that the RILU was being passed over in these negotiations. On 24 September, some days after his letter to the Comintern, and after he had spoken in the meantime to Fimmen, who had finally come to Moscow on a private visit, he again approached Manuil'sky. He proposed that an international organ of the unity movement should be published in England in three languages, and that a meeting should be held with the left Amsterdamers. Fimmen considered Lozovsky's second proposal to have no sense at all. It was clear to him that such an act would be an open declaration of war on the IFTU.⁶⁷ Lozovsky continued to intervene with the Comintern leadership, always with the same objective of trying to ensure that the RILU was not left out in the cold in any possible unity initiative.⁶⁸

3 and 397–400). When Tomskey informed the congress towards the end of its proceedings about the agreement reached in the meantime with the British trade unions, approval was given unanimously (pp. 414–17).

67 RGASPI 534/3/90/132–3. At the beginning of 1924, in a book published in several languages (English: *Labour's Alternative. The United States or Europe Limited*, [sic] London, 1924; German: *Vereinigte Staaten Europas oder Europa AG. Ein internationaler Ausblick*, Jena, 1924), Fimmen had presented his political perspective on the international situation. He predicted a tremendous intensification in class struggles. He also proposed a programme for transforming the international trade-union movement. The ITSS were in his view the strongest weapon of the workers' movement; they ought to stand side by side with the national centres as the second pillar of the IFTU. The admission of the Russian trade unions – and, through their mediation, of the other organisations of the RILU – was necessary for any really powerful action. He handed over a memorandum to this effect, including appropriate recommendations, to the Soviet representative Smoliansky at the time of the Vienna congress. The latter then informed both the RILU and the Comintern of its contents after his return to Russia (RGASPI 534/3/86/64–8). Fimmen's visit to Moscow at the end of September and the beginning of October 1924 left few traces behind in the RILU archive, no doubt because he did not hold his discussions in Moscow as an official representative, and he did not talk specially to the RILU. One concrete result of his trip, however, was clearly the decision to start work on a journal to promote international unity. This did in fact start to come out in 1925. Lozovsky informed the Comintern leadership of this on 24 September and he told a meeting of the joint action committee of the Comintern and the RILU the same thing on 31 October (RGASPI 534/3/86/22 and RGASPI 534/3/90/133). He was also presumably referring to this when he informed Zinoviev in a letter dated 10 October that 'Fimmen's project' was 'a clever move'. A number of Fimmen's comments on the situation in Russia then led to vehement polemics against him by European social-democratic leaders. See the information in Tosstorff 1997, p. 101, and the collection of newspaper cuttings on the subject in the ITF archive (MRC MSS 159/10/19).

68 For instance, RGASPI 534/3/90/144, 146–8 and 169.

With the foundation of the National Minority Movement (NMM) at a conference in London on 24–25 August – a week before the TUC congress at Hull – the RILU gained an instrument with which it could at least theoretically intervene independently in the British trade-union movement. More than 270 delegates from trade-union organisations attended – local or regional bodies of individual trade unions as well as trades councils – claiming to represent 200,000 members. The Minority Movement provided the communist-influenced trade-union opposition with an organisational framework at the grassroots level. The British Bureau of the RILU was also subsumed under it. Tom Mann was its President, Harry Pollitt its General Secretary, and George Hardy its Organising Secretary. The NMM called for the British trade-union movement to make a new start on the path of class struggle. Quoting the resolutions of the Third RILU Congress, it demanded that the General Council move towards international trade-union unity by persuading the IFTU to call an international unity congress.⁶⁹ But the NMM's initiatives fell on deaf ears. The General Council confirmed that it had received its resolutions, but pointed out that only member organisations of the TUC had the right to make proposals.⁷⁰ Purcell did admittedly agree at his informal meeting with Stalin, Bukharin and Zinoviev in November to get into contact with the Minority Movement, and the left-wing group on the General Council had already resolved to do this.⁷¹ But the only things to come out of this promise were informal contacts. At the official level, the General Council was careful to emphasise its separation from the Minority Movement. When it appeared at the end of December as if a Russian delegation was about to travel to Britain to take part in a special conference of the NMM to promote international trade-union unity, scheduled for the end of January, the General Council immediately intervened with Tomskey. It sent a telegram

69 The resolutions of the NMM congress are printed in: *Report of the National Minority Conference. Held August 23 and 24 1924*, London, 1924. On the course of the congress, see *The Worker*, no. 301, 30 August 1924 (this was previously the newspaper of the Scottish Shop Stewards' Movement, and it now became the paper of the NMM). See also Streiter 1982, pp. 325–31 and Macfarlane 1966, pp. 151–2. The only monograph on the NMM continues to be Martin (1969), but it has little to say about the founding conference (Martin 1969, p. 36). Nevertheless, it contains valuable information on the background to the NMM's establishment and the degree to which it had a real presence in the British workers' movement when it was founded. Pollitt was the driving force in the leadership of the NMM, while Mann played a more prominent, but a more symbolic role, on account of his advanced age. He had 'little part either in the administration or in political decisions', as his biographer Chushichi Tsuzuki has written (Tsuzuki 1991, p. 215).

70 Calhoun 1976, pp. 81–2.

71 RGASPI 534/3/83/3–4.

saying that this would make the negotiations in the IFTU much more difficult. Pollitt was able to deny straight away that any Russians would be coming. And Tomskey informed the TUC's General Council that they had no such intention. The conference took place on 25 January 1925 in London without Russian participation, and its aim was to support the British representatives on the eve of the meeting of the IFTU Council.⁷²

The IFTU Council sat from 5–7 February in Amsterdam. There were a number of organisational and financial questions on the agenda, as well as the preparations for a conference on migration, relations with the co-operatives, and other matters.⁷³ But the central theme was naturally what the IFTU's relationship with the Russian trade unions would be.⁷⁴ The discussion was introduced by Oudegeest, who immediately formulated his position in the form of a

72 MRC 292/910.3; *The Worker*, no. 321, 31 January 1925; and *National Minority Movement. Unity Conference Battersea Town Hall January 25, 1925*, London, 1925 (item 9 on the conference agenda, after the president's concluding speech, was the song 'The Red Army March'). See also Calhoun 1976, pp. 108–9.

73 'Ausschuß-Sitzung des IGB vom 5.–7. Februar 1925 in Amsterdam', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January–March 1925, pp. 8–11.

74 There are English-language minutes of these meetings: 'Report of Meetings of the General Council of the International Federation of Trade Unions held in Amsterdam February 6th and 7th 1925, re: Relations with Russia' (MRC MSS 292/915/3). Bramley's speech was later issued in a number of languages. The English version is: Fred Bramley, *Relations with Russia: a speech in favour of international trade union unity*, London, 1925. The German version: Fred Bramley, *Warum müssen wir uns mit den Russen vereinigen?*, Brussels, 1926. A brief account of the meetings was published as *International Trade Union Unity. Special Supplement to the Monthly Circular of the Labour Research Department, March 1925* ('What Happened at Amsterdam?', pp. x–xi). See also Calhoun 1976, pp. 115–18. This discussion was preceded by the examination of a complaint by Bramley in the name of the TUC in which the language of IFTU press reports by Oudegeest in particular was criticised. He had used these press reports to make a sharp attack on the British delegation to Russia. Bramley's resolution on his complaint received only the four British votes (Purcell, Brown, Bramley and Cook). All the other members of the Council voted against the resolution (from the minutes of the discussion of this agenda item published as undated supplement no. 5 to the IFTU Press Reports under the title 'Meeting of the General Council of the IFTU held 5th. February, 1925, at Amsterdam'). A joint meeting of the IFTU Bureau and the Executive of the LSI took place on 3–4 January, just before the IFTU Council met, at which the TUC delegation to Russia was strongly attacked (*International Trade Union Unity*, p. ix). The official report on this meeting observed a diplomatic silence on the matter, however (see 'Gemeinsame Sitzung der Exekutiven des IGB und der Sozialistischen Arbeiter-Internationale', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January–March 1925, pp. 7–8).

motion. The Russians, he said, had been entirely hostile to the initiative taken by the Vienna congress. The correspondence with Moscow should therefore cease. The opposing view was put forward by Bramley in an emphatic speech which took a broad approach to the whole problem. He made it clear that the atmosphere in Russia had made a positive impression on him, a person who came from the right wing of the British trade-union movement. The TUC demanded that a joint discussion should be held between the IFTU and the Russian trade unions, without imposing any kind of precondition. A number of representatives of national trade-union centres, particularly the Germans, vehemently opposed any co-operation with the Russians. Two compromise resolutions were brought forward in opposition to the British proposal. The British representatives objected to these resolutions on the grounds that almost insurmountable preconditions were once again being set. When it came to a vote, six people favoured the British proposal (the four TUC representatives, Fimmen and the Danish representative Madsen), 13 voted against, and there was one abstention. A Swiss compromise proposal was rejected. Finally the chairman of the Dutch trade unions and of the Factory Workers' International, Stenhuis, who represented a kind of middle position, introduced a resolution which was accepted by 14 votes to five. It contained the statement that the Russians could be admitted if they expressed the desire to be admitted. If they did this, the Council was ready to have a meeting with them, and a commission was appointed for that purpose.

This resolution could be interpreted in different ways. What lay behind the demand that the Russians first express their desire to be admitted was the notion held by the right wing of Amsterdam, which opposed their admission, that they would be able to set very stringent conditions which would be unacceptable to the Russians. This explains why Oudegeest and the Germans voted for Stenhuis's resolution. The text of the resolution, though, did not unambiguously require the setting of conditions. The resolution could also be seen as opening the door to Moscow, but the context was clear. This was a victory won by outvoting the British representatives. Accordingly, the commentaries made on the meeting afterwards by Oudegeest, the SPD organ *Vorwärts*, and other sources too, stressed this aspect.⁷⁵

The Russians grasped the point very quickly as well, although the initial reaction in *Pravda* still referred to a compromise. Soon the resolution was subjected to sharp attacks, with no favourable comments.⁷⁶ The ball was once

75 See the quotations in *International Trade Union Unity*, pp. xi–xii.

76 Calhoun 1976, pp. 119–21. The sharper tone of the Soviet reaction was clearly not just

again in the British court. Long negotiations now began between the TUC General Council, its international committee, and the Russians. The Russian trade-union leadership had already sent Shmidt, the People's Commissar for Labour, who was also a member of the VTsSPS, to London at the beginning of January, before the meeting of the IFTU Council. His task was in general to improve communications with Britain and in particular to put into effect the project of publishing a periodical on international unity, which had been worked out in Moscow in the autumn of 1924.⁷⁷ After long discussions in the TUC General Council, these intensive contacts eventuated in the calling of an Anglo-Soviet conference to set up a joint committee, a step which the Soviet trade-union leadership had long demanded.

This conference was scheduled to meet at the beginning of April. But before that could happen, the Fifth Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI took place, between 21 March and 6 April 1925.⁷⁸ Zinoviev delivered the main report, in which he made a few brief comments on developments in England, where he expected

the result of a closer reading of the resolution and the commentaries on it. A further reason lay in the discussions and resolutions of the responsible Soviet bodies, which ultimately shrank back from engaging in any initiative with an uncertain outcome. The comments sent back to Russia by the VTsSPS representative in London, Shmidt – see the next footnote – also had their effect. Ironically, he largely accepted the interpretation of the resolution made by the right wing of the IFTU, although on the other hand he was optimistic about the initiatives promised by the left. Jacob Walcher, looking back in the spring of 1928, during the preparations for the Fourth RILU Congress, sketched out a different tactical scenario on page 5 of a long discussion paper entitled 'Unser Kampf um die internationale Gewerkschaftseinheit' (SAPMO 12/708/48), looking at the behaviour of the various currents in the IFTU: 'In my opinion it would have been better for our cause if our side had interpreted the resolution in the same way as the left wing of the IFTU did, irrespective of all necessary criticism. If the Russian trade unions had said after this resolution that they wanted to be admitted to the IFTU, and to hold a conference in order to establish the conditions under which this could take place, the people in the middle would have been compelled to lay their cards on the table. This would inevitably have sharpened divisions in the Amsterdam camp and facilitated our struggle to conquer the masses'.

77 His reports are in RGASPI 534/3/126. Calhoun (1976, pp. 120 and 126–7) mentions the contacts between Shmidt and the British on the basis of documents in the TUC archive, but he is not certain that Shmidt was actually present in London. For a contrary view, cf. Gorodetsky 1977, pp. 105–6 and Karpachev 1987, pp. 92–3. See also the later remarks of Maisky, who was then just beginning his diplomatic career in London, on Russian contacts with the TUC General Council (I.M. Maisky, 'Iz Londonskikh vospominanii', *Novyi mir*, no. 4, April 1968, pp. 195–216, here pp. 210–16).

78 There is a general account of this Plenum in Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 292–320.

that the communists would make a breakthrough, and become a mass movement.⁷⁹ He was followed by Lozovsky, who made an exhaustive report on the international trade-union situation.⁸⁰ He indicated his complete support for Russian contacts with the TUC, but he gave a characteristic twist to his comments by warning emphatically against any attempt to liquidate the RILU. The RILU could only be dissolved, he said, together with Amsterdam, in other words by the establishment of a unified trade-union international. In the debate that followed, no one mentioned the dilemma that this position created for the Russian trade unionists.⁸¹ No Russian trade-union representative spoke in the debate, not even Tomsky. The resolution adopted on this point of the agenda spoke only of the *rapprochement* between the British and Soviet trade unions as the most important step towards international trade-union unity. No one referred to a link between this and Lozovsky's rejection of a one-sided liquidation of the RILU, even in the form of a withdrawal of the VTsSPS from the RILU in order to join the IFTU.⁸²

Having secured this backing, the Soviet trade-union delegation, led by Tomsky, was able to travel to London, where its conference with the TUC took place from 6–8 April 1925.⁸³

The result of the London conference was that a common basis was agreed, in which both sides recognised each other's position without having to abandon what was essential to each of them. The Russians agreed to talk to Amsterdam to secure trade-union unity. The British wanted to make sure that in return Amsterdam would be ready to talk without imposing conditions. (They had made it clear in a statement at the start of the discussion that if Amsterdam refused to take part in conversations, they would themselves take the initiative. This was promising more than they could achieve, as it soon turned out). What was most important was that a concrete organisational result had come out of this, in the shape of a joint committee, which became known as the Anglo-

79 *Protokoll. Erweiterte Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale. Moskau, 21. März–6. April 1925*, Hamburg, 1925, pp. 41–4.

80 *Protokoll. Erweiterte Exekutive 1925*, pp. 181–201.

81 *Protokoll. Erweiterte Exekutive 1925*, pp. 201–26.

82 *Erweiterte Exekutive (März/April 1925). Thesen und Resolutionen*, Hamburg, 1925, p. 70.

83 The minutes of the meeting were published by the TUC: *Russia and International Unity. Anglo-Russian Conference, held at 32 Eccleston Square, London, SW1, on 6th, 7th and 8th April, 1925. Report for affiliated societies of the Trades Union Congress*, London, 1925. Lozovsky also produced a detailed account: A. Losowsky, *Die englisch-russische Gewerkschaftskonferenz*, Berlin, 1925. See also Calhoun 1976, pp. 131–47, on the preparation and course of the conference.

Russian Committee, although it was officially described as the Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council. After the Russian delegation had returned home, this result was approved by the Russian trade-union leadership, by the Fourteenth Party Conference which was held at the end of April, and also by the Executive Bureau of the RILU.⁸⁴ But when the matter was discussed at the plenum of the VTsSPS, there was a certain amount of criticism. A Ukrainian trade-union leader opined that they should have taken the offensive more strongly against Amsterdam, but he added that he did not want to detract from the unanimous agreement for the step they had taken. It was particularly significant that the plenum decided to set up a Committee for Foreign Relations, which the TUC had asked for, so as to provide an appropriate interlocutor for its own International Committee.⁸⁵

This was the beginning of the story of the Anglo-Russian Committee, a body that only lasted for two years and was ultimately unsuccessful. It was faced with growing criticism and strong resistance from the right wing of the IFTU, and in the last year of its existence it was also a subject of disagreement within the communist party. The Committee had five official meetings: in London on 17 September 1925, in Berlin on 8–9 December 1925, in Paris on 30 July 1926, in Berlin on 23 August 1926 and in Berlin again between 29 March and 1 April 1927. In addition, there was also an informal meeting in Berlin in June 1927.⁸⁶ The results of all these meetings were vague. The British

84 Calhoun 1976, pp. 153–5; Gorodetsky 1977, pp. 110–12; and Karpachev 1987, p. 94. The Central Council of the RILU also of course approved the result of the conference.

85 Pankratov 1972, pp. 203–4 and *Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR 1924–1926gg. Otchet VTsSPS k VII s'ezdu professional'nykh soiuзов*, Moscow, 1926, p. 2. Later on, this committee served as an instrument with that the VTsSPS could carry on its own policy, independently of the RILU. Among other things, it issued a trade-union bulletin in numerous languages, which gave information on the development of the Russian trade unions (*Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR 1924–1926gg.* 1926, p. 17. The records of this committee are in GARF 5451/13a).

86 Calhoun 1976, pp. 184–5, 199–202, 274–7, 281–7 and 336–9; and Gorodetsky 1977, pp. 119, 125, 192–8, 243 and 247. There are various versions of the minutes in the TUC archive (MRC MSS 292/947/20 and 25). The printed version of the minutes is *Russia and International Unity. Meetings of the Anglo-Russian Joint Advisory Council held in Paris, July 30 and 31, 1926, and in Berlin, August 23, 24 and 25, 1926. Report for Affiliated Societies of the Trades Union Congress*, London, 1926. Apart from this, Tomskey was the guest of the TUC congress in Scarborough between 7 and 12 September 1925. Then Citrine and Hicks visited the Soviet Union at Tomskey's invitation between the middle of September and the middle of October, a visit which Citrine described in detail in his memoirs (Citrine 1964, pp. 95–122). They had numerous conversations there, but only with representatives of the VTsSPS, not with Lozovsky or anyone else from the RILU.

representatives did no more than declare their willingness to become active in Amsterdam when an appropriate opportunity presented itself. The measures actually taken were rather modest. They were always related to the Russian trade unions. The question of the RILU, and thus of the removal of the split in the international trade-union movement outside Russia, was never brought up for discussion. The Norwegian and Finnish trade-union federations showed great interest in the Committee, since they did not belong to either of the trade-union internationals. The Russian trade unions also repeatedly endeavoured to bring them into the equation – they tried for instance to get the internationally uncommitted Norwegians to join in the Committee's meetings – but they came up against British resistance. The TUC did not want to expose itself to the accusation that it was setting up a third trade-union international.⁸⁷

Initial expectations on the Russian side were high. Tomsky no doubt hoped that British mediation would allow him to join the IFTU as a partner, with influence on its rules. The IFTU, on the other hand, demanded a kind of subordination. This difference of views determined the way the correspondence with the IFTU developed.⁸⁸ Not until 19 May did the Russians give an official reply to the decision of the IFTU Council. Referring to the support they now had from the TUC, the Russians called on the IFTU to rethink its earlier decision, and to agree to a conference without preconditions. It would undoubtedly be possible, they added, to come closer to unity with a meeting of that type. The Russian reply was referred to the Council for a decision. This did not meet until 5 December.⁸⁹ The majority of the IFTU Council was unwilling to make any

87 MRC MSS 292/910.3/1 and 4; Calhoun 1976, pp. 113–14, 134, 155–6, 184 and 200; and Pankratov 1972, pp. 207, 209 and 211. As Citrine wrote in his memoirs (1964, p. 93): 'We saw it simply as a way of making a connection, with the aim of overcoming the gap between the Russians and the Western trade unions. Our intention was to see the Russians in the IFTU. We did not intend to develop the Committee into a new international, which would be a rival to the IFTU'.

88 The correspondence between February and December 1925 is printed in both Tomsky 1926, pp. 40–5 and *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1924–1926*, pp. 51–3.

89 'Sitzung des Ausschusses des IGB am 4. und 5. Dezember in Amsterdam', *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung*, no. 1, January–March 1926, pp. 12–14; and 'Report of the Meeting of the General Council of the International Federation of Trade Unions held at Amsterdam, the 4th and 5th December, 1925' (MRC MSS 292/915.3). The IFTU Executive (as the Bureau was now called) held a meeting beforehand with the General Council of the TUC so as to restrain the latter from undertaking any independent initiative towards the Russians (Calhoun 1976, pp. 195–7). The IFTU majority was successful in this, partly because when fresh elections for the General Council of the TUC were held in September 1925 at the

concessions. The February resolution was confirmed, and it said that any fresh resolution would be superfluous. This news was immediately transmitted to Moscow. There was a further exchange of letters between Moscow and Amsterdam in the next few months, in which each party assured the other that they had received their letters and that they had not changed their position on the issues. The correspondence came to an end in March 1926.⁹⁰ The Russians were at an impasse. In January 1927, admittedly, the British representative on the IFTU Council again tried to bring about a conference with them. But his proposal was immediately voted down.⁹¹ The British were clearly not in a position to act as a pressure group.

Thus the Anglo-Russian Committee ultimately disappointed the hopes that had been placed upon it. It did, however, at least give a strong impulse to unity movements in other countries. A number of these groups emerged within IFTU-affiliated trade unions in several Western European countries. They were formally independent of the RILU, presented themselves as non-communist, and issued publications, usually with the word 'unity' in the title.⁹² They often arose in connection with campaigns for the sending of delegations of workers to visit Russia. Unlike the British delegation, which was sent by the leadership of a national trade-union centre, these people were delegated by factories and local trade-union cells. The communist parties ultimately stood behind these groups as their organisers. It was at least possible to gain the support of lower-level social-democratic union functionaries by this method.⁹³ The organisation (and above all the financial support) for these activities was provided by the VTsSPS's Committee for Foreign Relations. The RILU played only a subordinate role.

In Germany, for example, the delegation that visited Russia in July 1925 produced a journal with the programmatic title *Die Einheit*.⁹⁴ This came out

Scarborough congress, which Tomskey attended as the Soviet representative, they resulted in a certain shift to the right in its composition.

90 Tomskey 1926, pp. 45–7; *Tätigkeitsbericht IGB 1924–1926*, pp. 53–5.

91 'Meeting of General Council of the IFTU held in Amsterdam on the 13th January 1926' (MRC MSS 292/915/9).

92 There is a cursory survey of these in *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1925–1927*, pp. 53–6.

93 According to Russian trade-union data, 21 delegations visited the country in the year 1925–6 (*Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR 1924–1926gg.* 1926, pp. 12–13). There is a particularly instructive description of the Austrian delegations which went to Russia up to the beginning of the 1930s in McLoughlin, Schafranek and Szevera 1997, pp. 13–47. There are extensive materials on the individual delegations in the documents produced by the VTsSPS Committee for Foreign Relations (GARF 5451/13a/44–84).

94 *Was sahen 58 deutsche Arbeiter in Rußland? Bericht der deutschen Arbeiter-Delegation über*

from 1926 to 1929. In the latter year, the editorial board was removed, because it was staffed by 'right' communists alongside a few social democrats, and it was renamed the organ of the Red Trade Union Opposition, as part of the new communist policy towards the trade unions.

The unity movement in Germany never extended beyond the immediate sphere of influence of the communist party. In Belgium, things were different. Here the unity movement was led by the left socialist leader of the Clothing Workers' Union, Frans Liebaers. Liebaers was a pillar of the international unity movement until conflicts developed in 1926–7 with the communist party. The Russian trade-union leaders vainly tried to settle these conflicts by finding a compromise, but they were also a reflection of factional struggles within the Belgian party between the supporters of Trotsky and of Stalin.⁹⁵ In the Netherlands, Fimmen was naturally the spokesman of the unity movement, until 1927, when he was forced to withdraw from it by pressure from the ITF leadership.⁹⁶

The English-language international journal which was established to give expression to the idea of unity first launched in autumn 1924 had particular significance. Its title was *Trade Union Unity. A Monthly Magazine of International*

ihren Aufenthalt in Rußland vom 14. Juli bis zum 28. August 1925, Berlin, 1925 (with a preface by Fimmen, pp. 10–12); Zarusky 1992, pp. 219–30; and Dagmar Goldbeck, 'Der Verlag Die Einheit G.m.b.H. Berlin (1926–1929)', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 1, 1986, pp. 80–6. Documents on the delegation and issues of the journal are preserved in SAPMO I 2/708/56 and I 6/3/159 and 163.

95 F. Liebaers and J.-B. Cornet, *Quinze jours en Russie Soviétique*, Brussels, 1925; Frans Liebaers, *Lettre ouverte aux ouvriers de la Russie Soviétique*, Anderlecht, 1927; Nadya De Beule, *Le trotskisme belge. L'histoire d'un groupe de communistes oppositionnels 1925–1940*, Brussels, 1985, pp. 35–40; and a written communication from Herman Liebaers, 15 January 1993. Liebaers also tried without success to use his position of leadership in the Belgian Clothing Workers' Union to generate support in the International Clothing Workers' Federation for the admission of the Russians (*Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des zweiten Internationalen Bekleidungsarbeiter-Kongresses. Abgehalten vom 8. bis 10. August 1927 in Paris*, Amsterdam, 1927, pp. 11–13 and 96–106). The split in the Belgian unity movement and the subsequent confrontation with the communist party was also associated with a split in the Belgian Clothing Workers' Union. The communist minority set up its own union, but it was only able to gain the support of a group of Jewish immigrants, mostly hat-makers, and it remained isolated (*Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des vierten Internationalen Bekleidungsarbeiter-Kongresses. Abgehalten vom 15. bis 17. Juni 1930 in Leipzig*, Amsterdam, 1930, pp. 14–15 and 84–5 and Rudi Van Doorslaer, *Kinderen van het getto. Joodse revolutionairen in België 1925–1940*, Antwerp, 1995, pp. 65–72).

96 Ger Hermesen, *Nederlands kommunisme. Gebundelde opstellen*, Nijmegen, 1982, pp. 112–13; and Tosstorff 1997, pp. 101–3.

Trade Unionism, and its first issue appeared in April 1925 in London, edited by Purcell, Fimmen and Hicks. The address of the journal was the same as that of the Labour Research Department, a 'think tank' for British trade unions which was under strong communist influence.⁹⁷ Its financial security was ensured by the Russian trade unions, which placed a regular order for a large number of copies.⁹⁸ These propagandist activities of international scope also included the setting up of an international unity publisher in Brussels, in which Fimmen again occupied a leading position. The publishing house was not particularly active, but it was also used periodically for unity publications in Germany.⁹⁹

The last issue of *Trade Union Unity* appeared in August 1926. Presumably the Russian trade unions withdrew their financial support after relations cooled between the TUC and the VTsSPS, as a result of the failure of the general strike of May 1926 in Britain, which had been called in solidarity with the miners, who were fighting against a drastic reduction in their wages.¹⁰⁰ The left of the TUC General Council was a particular object of attack from the Soviet side after the failure of the strike. It had not justified the hopes of the Russians, since it had acted exactly like the right. Far from engaging in any kind of revolutionary action, it had supported the decision to break off the strike after two weeks without achieving any results for the miners. The General Council as a body had done everything it could to prevent even the slightest suspicion arising of a plan to overthrow the 'constitutional order'. It even refused to accept the money collected by the Soviet trade unions in support of the strikers.¹⁰¹

97 Calhoun 1976, pp. 130–1.

98 See the documentation preserved in GARF 5451/13a/22.

99 See the entry in the Belgian official register relating to the establishment of the publishing house in *Recueil des actes et documents relatifs aux sociétés commerciales*, 7 March 1926, pp. 1696–700. Goldbeck (1986, p. 83) mistakenly claims that the location given for the publishing house was fictitious. When the IFTU heard about the new publishing house and Fimmen's leading part in it, it immediately made a fierce public attack on the project: 'Die "Einheit" und ihre Finanzierung', *Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 13, 20 March 1926. The project gave further impetus to the campaign against Fimmen by his opponents within the ITF, who, as indicated above, were finally able to force him to withdraw from the movement for unity.

100 On the miners' strike, the general strike, the role of the TUC and the significance of these questions for the Anglo-Russian Committee, see Calhoun (1976, pp. 233–48) and Gorodetsky (1977, pp. 145–59). These works also contain references to the extensive literature on the general strike. On the role of the CPGB in both strikes, see Macfarlane (1966, pp. 158–76). Citrine (1964, pp. 129–252) is a report by a leading participant in these events.

101 On the role of the leaders of the Soviet communist party and the Soviet trade unions during the general strike, as well as the differences of opinion which arose shortly afterwards,

Although it made a series of public attacks on the TUC General Council, the Soviet trade-union leadership continued for the moment to support the Anglo-Russian Committee. The troika consisting of Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, which had led the party since Lenin's death, had broken apart at the end of 1925. It was replaced by Stalin's alliance with the right of the party, to which Tomsky belonged, and it gave the Anglo-Russian Committee a new function. It was no longer expected to establish international trade-union unity and at the same time promote the growth of a revolutionary movement in England. It had clearly failed in both respects. Its main task was now a diplomatic one, to help to protect 'socialism in one country'. The Committee was now described as an important means of warding off the anti-Soviet offensive of the British conservative government.¹⁰² In contrast to this, a break with the Anglo-Russian Committee was one of the two most important international demands of the United Opposition formed in the spring of 1926 by Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. The other was a change in the Comintern's policy in China.¹⁰³ (The factional struggle within the Bolshevik Party will not be examined here, since the central issues were questions of internal Soviet policy). The dispute about the Anglo-Russian Committee also had an impact on the Soviet trade unions, since the spokesmen of the United Opposition raised the same demand there.¹⁰⁴

see the documents printed in L.G. Babichenko, 'Vseobshchaia zabastovka v Anglii v mae 1926g. iz "osoboi papki" Politbiuro TsK VKP (B)', *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 1, 1995, pp. 5–28. The Bolshevik leadership sent Tomsky to Paris to co-ordinate solidarity work. On the mobilisation of the Soviet working class, see A.L.-ss 1926, and *Der englische Bergarbeiter-Streik und die Arbeiter der Union der Sozialistischen Sowjet-Republik*, hg. vom Allrussischen Zentralen Gewerkschaftsrat, Brussels, 1926.

102 On this shift in the Committee's functions, see the remarks of Calhoun (1976, pp. 207 and 259–60) and Gorodetsky (1977, pp. 202–3 and 207–9).

103 See Alexander Watlin, 'Das anglo-russische Komitee und der innerparteiliche Kampf der KPdSU (B)', in Alexander Watlin, *Die Komintern 1919–1929. Historische Studien*, Mainz, 1993, pp. 103–24. A number of opposition documents on the Anglo-Russian Committee can be found in: *Leon Trotsky on Britain*, New York, 1973.

104 On the impact of the factional struggle in the Bolshevik Party on the Soviet trade unions, see 'Sovetskie profsoiuzy protiv "novoi oppozitsii" (1927 god)', *Sovetskie arkhivy*, no. 3, 1967, pp. 27–37; Iu.V. Voskresenskii and D.T. Subbotin, 'Uchastie sovetskikh profsoiuzov v bor'be Kommunisticheskoi Partii s trotskistami v 1926–1927gg', *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 7, 1966, pp. 113–19; and Pankratov 1972, pp. 229–30. The spokesmen of the Trotskyist opposition within the trade unions were the chairman of the Seamen's Union, Ishchenko, the chairman of the Food and Drink Workers' Union, Krol', and the assistant chief editor of the VTsSPS organ *Trud*, Valentinov.

It can almost be said that the further existence of the Anglo-Russian Committee was of greater concern to the top Bolshevik leadership than it was to the committee itself. It did, it is true, hold a number of further meetings, as indicated above. But these meetings always ended in statements passing over in diplomatic silence differences which had previously been publicly admitted and carefully avoiding any commitment to concrete measures, such as those that related to the Soviet demand to take action against the IFTU, or even the threat of British intervention against the Soviet Union. In September 1927, finally, the TUC unilaterally proclaimed, at its Edinburgh congress of that year, that the committee had ceased to exist.¹⁰⁵

This decision meant that all the attempts made by the Russian trade unions to get into the IFTU via the TUC had ended in failure. After another British initiative, which we dealt with earlier, had been rejected at a meeting of the IFTU Council at the beginning of 1927, the TUC replied with its customary protest, followed as usual by its immediate rejection by the IFTU.¹⁰⁶ This was followed, however, by a meeting – which was purely informal – between Jouhaux, Oudegeest and Soviet trade-union representatives in May 1927.¹⁰⁷ The

105 *Report of Proceedings at the 59th. Annual Trades Union Congress. Held at Edinburgh September 5th to 10th 1927*, London, 1927, pp. 200–15, 358–70 and 493–502. This decision was the signal for the start of an offensive by the General Council against communist influence in the trade unions and against the Minority Movement in particular. See chapter 7, section 5.

106 The TUC General Council was particularly infuriated by the fact that the proposal to admit the Russians, introduced by its member Hicks, was voted down without discussion. The TUC resolution on the matter and the reply of the IFTU Executive on 24–25 February 1927 are printed in *Report of Proceedings at the 59th Annual Trades Union Congress 1927*, pp. 216–17.

107 Oudegeest reported on this meeting in the Dutch social-democratic press, and his report was then reproduced by *Vorwärts*. It said that the Russian trade-union representatives had been very affable, and friendly contact had been possible between the two sides. It was possible to hope, he added, 'that their admission to the IFTU can soon be facilitated' ('Annäherung Moskaus an Amsterdam? Oudegeest über die Russen in Genf', *Vorwärts*, no. 253, 31 May 1927). Some days later, he added that they had had a meeting with the Russian trade-union representatives. 'Among other things we spoke about unity in the trade-union movement, and the Russian delegate Lepse assured us no fewer than three times that he would provide an opportunity for a thorough exchange of views between the Russians and some representatives of the IFTU. Although Lepse was reminded of this promise on several subsequent occasions the exchange of views did not take place. The Russian delegation was apparently so busy in its negotiations with the capitalists even outside the conference hall that it had no more time left over for the comrades from the IFTU. The outstretched hand has been ignored once again' ('Die Einheitsfront. Sie ist den

meeting occurred quite accidentally on the occasion of an economic conference of the League of Nations in Geneva. It did not lead to anything.

On the contrary, old scores were settled at the IFTU congress which was held in August 1927. Brown's disclosure of the content of Oudegeest's letter to Jouhaux after the Vienna congress gave reason to believe that the right wing of the IFTU had wanted to sabotage his offer to the Russians from the very beginning. Oudegeest had to resign (see above). In response to that, the majority, led by the ADGB, which had regained its strength since the stabilisation of the Weimar Republic, provoked the British by not electing Purcell as IFTU president, on the grounds that he was too 'yielding' towards Moscow. Instead they elected another Briton, of their own choice this time. He did not accept the position, however.¹⁰⁸ Complete deadlock ensued, worsened by financial difficulties.¹⁰⁹

There were now long months of negotiations. During this time, the TUC removed the main stumbling block by burying the Anglo-Russian Committee, and they finally arrived at a compromise at a Management Committee sitting at

Russen nur ein taktisches Manöver', *Vorwärts*, no. 137, 9 June 1927). Afterwards, however, Oudegeest himself was apparently shocked by his own attitude at the time, because in the IFTU press report (*Presseberichte des IGB*, no. 21, 2 June 1927) the significance of the meeting was heavily downplayed. The meeting with the Russians, it was said there, took place on the occasion of a formal dinner. But a discussion of the unity question can only be conducted at a formally organised meeting. Fimmen could not help making this comment on the incident, in a letter to the Swedish transport workers' leader Charles Lindley: 'By the way, what do you think about the nice little dinner-party Oudegeest and Jouhaux had with the Russians in Geneva? It's amazing what an influence good food and wine can have on the minds of certain gentlemen' (MRC MSS 159/3/C/302).

108 The person in question was Hicks. See *Protokoll des IV. Ordentlichen Kongresses 1927*, pp. 99–103. In the heat of the battle, Oudegeest even described Purcell and Brown as 'Russian agents' (p. 89). Since the secretariat of the IFTU now had to be greatly reduced in size for financial reasons, they were able to take this opportunity to get rid of Brown. The provision for the representation of the ITSS in the IFTU General Council by three delegates was also abolished on this occasion, and Fimmen therefore also ceased to be part of the IFTU leadership.

109 Jouhaux took pains to give the impression, in an interview with the Soviet trade-union newspaper, that all doors remained open to the Russians. But his behaviour in the previous three years had given little indication of such a favourable attitude. George Hicks and Edo Fimmen were interviewed at the same time, and the case was very different with them. The commentary on these interviews in *Trud* expressed disappointment. Jouhaux was accused of pure hypocrisy, while the Amsterdam left-wingers were reproached for failing to follow up their words with deeds. The article was reprinted in *Inprekorr* ('Amsterdamer Führer über Fragen der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung. Unterredungen mit Jouhaux, Hicks und Fimmen', *Inprekorr*, no. 85, 23 August 1927, pp. 1857–60).

the end of September 1928 by electing the General Secretary of the TUC, Citrine, to the position of IFTU president, an office he continued to occupy until the outbreak of the Second World War.¹¹⁰ The way had now been definitely barred to any prospect of unity, quite apart from the fact that in the course of 1928 a complete reversal took place in the Russian view of the international situation. In November 1928, the president of the International Labour Office, Albert Thomas, who was a close friend of Jouhaux and had good connections with the IFTU leadership, was on a private information-gathering visit to Russia. He offered the Russian trade-union leaders his services as a confidential mediator, but by then such an offer had become completely pointless.¹¹¹

Even before the formal abolition of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Russian trade unions had begun to develop a different way of reaching international unity. They attempted to win the support of the internationally independent Norwegian and Finnish trade unions for an alliance. In the course of 1927, numerous individual Soviet trade unions had already made agreements with their Finnish and Norwegian counterparts for closer relations. 'Reciprocity Agreements' were concluded.¹¹² The Norwegian trade-union congress accepted these when it met in December 1927. At the same time, an initiative mounted by the Norwegian social democrats for a return to Amsterdam was rejected. The Norwegians agreed to hold a joint conference with the Soviet delegation which was present at the congress.¹¹³

110 *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1927/1930*, Amsterdam, 1930, pp. 7–8.

111 Pankratov 1972, p. 300. See Schaper (1959, pp. 294–6) on this visit by Thomas to Moscow. He does not, however, mention this offer.

112 Pankratov 1972, p. 236.

113 Pankratov 1972, pp. 236–7; Lorenz 1982, pp. 189–92; and Lorenz 1991, pp. 274–5. The resolution, passed by 152 votes to 84, to offer a Reciprocity Agreement to the Russians, arose out of a complex dynamic in Norway. There were disputes between the different currents in the Norwegian trade-union confederation, which ran parallel with the struggle between the three workers' parties (the Communist Party, the Norwegian Workers' Party, and the Social Democrats). The Social Democrats had repeatedly launched initiatives since 1923 for a return to Amsterdam, and these in turn had been promoted by the IFTU leadership. Oudegeest went to Oslo in August 1926 for these negotiations. The hopes placed by the trade-union leadership in the Anglo-Russian Committee had turned out to be illusory. But, according to Lorenz, the trade-union leaders then sought to prove their independent left-wing character in the course of the process of reunification of the Workers' Party with the Social Democrats by engaging in sharper criticism of IFTU reformism. This in turn made it possible for them to go along with communist initiatives aimed at strengthening connections with the Soviet Union.

This conference met from 15–18 February 1928 in Copenhagen. It included the Finns as well.¹¹⁴ The Finnish and Norwegian trade unions said they were ready to propose the holding of a joint conference to bring about international trade-union unity, and to support Soviet applications to be admitted to International Trade Secretariats. But great differences in the way the IFTU was viewed became apparent in the course of the discussions. Some of the Finns and Norwegians refused to accept the fierce attacks made by the Soviet representatives on the IFTU. The draft of a Reciprocity Agreement was finally accepted, providing for both a detailed exchange of information and reciprocal support. The Soviet side wanted there to be a kind of joint leadership as well, and this was rejected, on the grounds that it would have looked too much like setting up a new trade-union international.

The co-operation that now began was only in part successful. The Norwegian trade-union confederation was represented at the eighth Russian trade-union congress in the middle of December 1928,¹¹⁵ but by January 1929 it had already decided that the necessary conditions for the Reciprocity Agreement were no longer present. It should be put on ice for the moment.¹¹⁶ In cases where individual Norwegian or Finnish trade unions were led by Social Democrats, there were never any agreements reached with the Russians. This only happened where communist influence was strong. These Reciprocity Agreements lasted until 1930–1. They then fell victim, with some delay, to the ultra-left turn in communist trade-union politics after 1929.¹¹⁷ The Norwegian initiative towards Amsterdam was of course unsuccessful from the outset, as the IFTU immediately dismissed it.¹¹⁸

The Russians had energetically restarted their attempts to gain admission to the ITSS in 1924, with great hopes of success. They ended just as unsuccessfully as the attempt to achieve trade-union unity.¹¹⁹ Applications for admission were

114 The minutes are available in German in FES IMB 2361, Document 38 and in Russian in GARF 5451/12/192. The conference resolutions were printed in *Professional'nye soiuzy SSSR* 1928, pp. 12–21. See also Pankratov 1972, pp. 238–42 and Lorenz 1991, pp. 275–7.

115 See the Norwegian speech greeting the congress, with its solemn commitment to unity, in *Vos'moi s'ezd professional'nykh soiuзов SSSR (10–24 dekabria 1928g.)*. *Pol'nyi stenografiches-kii otchet*, Moscow, 1929, pp. 86–7.

116 Lorenz 1991, p. 278.

117 Pankratov 1972, pp. 244–54 and Lorenz 1991, pp. 277–85. The main argument used by the opponents of these agreements among the Norwegian trade unions played on the fear that co-operation with the Russians would endanger pan-Scandinavian co-operation, which was much more important.

118 The correspondence on this subject is printed in *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen* 1930, pp. 77–9.

119 The seriousness of these attempts is shown by the alterations made during these years

frequently made, and just as frequently rejected.¹²⁰ Although the relationship between the IFTU and the ITSS as originally defined in November 1923 and then ratified before the Vienna congress with minor changes left at least a back door open for the admission of the Russians, if the majority of the members of a given ITS really wanted this, Russian applications were consistently refused. Some of the Trade Secretariats were ready to allow Russian representatives to speak at congresses or executive meetings. But only in the case of the International Metalworkers' Federation was there an official meeting between a Russian delegation and its executive, in February 1927, although it did not produce

to the statutes of the individual Russian trade unions. Previously their membership of the RILU (through the VTsSPS) was firmly fixed in the statutes. This was now replaced by the formula that they belonged to 'the international association of trade unions'. This was a clear sign that they not only wanted to join the ITSS, but over and above this the whole Russian trade-union movement was ready to join up with Amsterdam, which meant that it was ready to liquidate the RILU. This almost imperceptible process of change was seized on by the United Opposition, which saw this, along with the manoeuvres around the Anglo-Russian Committee, as a further sign of the readiness of the Stalin-Bukharin leadership to capitulate. In this case, the capitulation would be the decision to abandon the RILU. Gorodetsky (1977, p. 128) and Carr (1972, vol. 3, p. 605) refer to relevant information on this campaign preserved in the Trotsky Archive at Harvard. Trotsky also mentioned the matter in his speech to the Fifteenth Party Conference (*xv konferentsiia Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)*). 26 oktiabria–3 noiabria 1926 g. *Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1927, p. 508). Nin, who was no doubt very familiar with the background of these events, gave the example of the Metal Workers' Union (VSRM), when he looked back after he had been expelled from the RILU (Nin 1978, p. 142). The different versions of the VSRM's statutes do in fact provide a good example of the changing international perspectives of the Russian trade unions. In paragraph 1, which lays down the tasks of the union, the version in 1918 and 1919 spoke in very general terms of the need to achieve the 'international unification of the working class'. In 1921, it was added that the VSRM was a member of the Third International, through its membership of the VTsSPS. In 1923, it was stated that it was a member of the RILU, through the VTsSPS, while at the same time it aimed to create a united Metalworkers' International. In the statutes as reformulated in 1925, the objective of securing a united Metalworkers' International (through the unification of the two international groupings) was no longer mentioned. Instead, according to the new wording, 'the VSRM is a part of the VTsSPS and through it of the international association of trade unions' (which amounted to a simple adherence to the IFTU). See *Vsesoiuznyi Soiuz Rabochikh Metallistov v revoliutsiiaakh*, vol. 1, part 1, 1927, pp. 484, 489 and 503 and part 2, 1928, pp. 422 and 438.

120 The whole of the correspondence on this subject and the relevant decisions by union executives or conferences are to be found in GARF 5451/13a/3. The minutes and the press organs of the individual ITSS also of course contain these documents, but for reasons of space we are unable to indicate them in detail here.

any concrete results.¹²¹ The only ITS recognised by the IFTU which admitted Russians continued to be the International Union of Federations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades (IUF).¹²²

The developments of the period after 1924 forced the RILU into the shadows. It was impossible for it to take the initiative internationally in relation to the IFTU or to exert any control over the independent international activities of the communist trade-union movement. Only with difficulty was it able to prevent the conflict with the Russian trade unions from being played out in public. In any case, it was an open secret. In the press reports issued by the IFTU, Oudegeest eagerly seized on Lozovsky's remarks about international unity, pointing out the ways in which his language differed from Tomsy's. He referred to Lozovsky's 'insincerity', since in reality he wanted communism and not unity, contrasting this with the positive attitude of the Russian trade unions.¹²³

This scarcely concealed confrontation between Tomsy and Lozovsky reached a height at the Fourteenth Party Congress of the AUCP (B) in December 1925. Tomsy's report on the work of the trade unions concentrated on their role in the Soviet economy. Despite the big economic expansion made possible by the NEP, negative aspects were also on the increase. Unemployment and corruption continued to be prevalent, and all this had its impact on the work of the trade unions. But he also gave a detailed presentation of the trade unions' international activities. He spoke of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the Russian trade unions' attitude towards Amsterdam, and he spoke of their offer of negotiations and their demand for a unity congress. Lozovsky, who opened the discussion, immediately took up this issue. Tomsy, he said, had spoken too vaguely. It was necessary to say clearly that the Russian trade unions could in no circumstances join Amsterdam. He also subjected his remarks on the international situation to a sharp critique. Tomsy had completely ignored the rapid growth of the Chinese trade-union movement, he said. After that, the discussion somewhat changed course, in that Lozovsky's comments on the danger

121 The minutes were published as *Wer verhindert die Einheit der internationalen Metallarbeiterbewegung? Stenographisches Protokoll der Verhandlungen des Metallarbeiterverbandes der Sowjetunion mit den Vertretern des Internationalen Metallarbeiter-Bundes in Berlin am 7. Februar 1927*, Berlin, 1927. Dißmann had died a few months before this meeting.

122 Even this relationship was dogged by frequent conflicts. On several occasions it appeared to be close to breaking up. One contentious issue was the prohibition of nightwork in the bakery trade, a traditional demand of the Bakers' Union, which was not adequately implemented in the Soviet Union. See on this Tosstorff 1998.

123 See *Presseberichte des IGB*, nos. 1, 6 January 1925; 18, 12 May 1925; 26, 14 July 1925; 37, 29 September 1925; 3, 19 January 1926, 4, 26 January 1926 and 11, 16 March 1926.

of capitulating to Amsterdam received the support of Glebov-Avilov, which was presumably rather unwelcome because he was the head of the Leningrad trade unions. (The 14th Party Congress marked the final breakup of the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev troika and the formation of the New Opposition centred on Leningrad, which united with Trotsky six months later). Other trade-union leaders supported Tomsky. Riazanov also spoke, attacking Lozovsky for repeating the errors of the Comintern, and he declared that he was ready to be accused of advocating an 'opportunist international trade union policy'. For Tomsky, that was probably a step too far.¹²⁴

Anyway, there had been an open clash, and this was noted with satisfaction by Oudegeest when the relevant minutes were circulated in Western Europe.¹²⁵ After the congress, the Bolshevik Central Committee was forced to issue a statement which was also circulated internationally, in which the existence of differences of opinion was categorically denied, despite the emergence of the New Opposition. It referred explicitly to 'counter-revolutionary tittle-tattle about the alleged intention of the Soviet trade unions to affiliate to the Amsterdam trade union federation'.¹²⁶ Some years later, Nin wrote that there had been downright sabotage of the work of the RILU by the Russian trade unions, which were acting in complete independence. They no longer even took part in its regular meetings.¹²⁷ In point of fact there were constant struggles

124 The minutes of Tomsky's report and the subsequent debate were published in: *XIV s"ezd vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B). 18–31 dekabria 1925g. Stengraficheskii otchet*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1926, pp. 722–48 and f 768–804. The RILU then printed a modified German version of this part of the minutes. It was unable to sweep the fundamental differences of opinion entirely under the carpet, but it did carry out some 'editorial smoothing' of the excessively sharp formulations in some of the speeches, without admitting the fact. See its publication *Die Gewerkschaftsarbeit auf dem XIV. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei der Sowjet-Union*, Berlin, 1926.

125 *Presseberichte des IGB*, nos. 3, 19 January 1926 and 4, 26 January 1926.

126 This statement is printed in *Die Gewerkschaftsarbeit auf dem XIV. Parteitag* 1926, pp. 61–4.

127 Nin 1978, p. 142. This was particularly apparent at the March 1926 meeting of the RILU's Central Council. No spokesman of the VTsSPS or of the 'course to the right' was present. Tomsky, Mel'nichansky, Iaglom and Dogadov were absent. But it also applied to the Executive Bureau. Of the five elected Russian members – one of whom was of course Lozovsky – and the six Russian candidates no single representative of the VTsSPS took part in its sittings over a long stretch of time. If one of them did appear it tended to be a person of the second rank. A similar lack of interest was also displayed by the Comintern, once it was under the direction of the 'rightist' Bukharin. Lozovsky complained bitterly to him in a letter of 19 February 1927 that he had long been trying to speak to him about RILU matters, but without success. Was he uninterested in the RILU, despite his statement at the

beneath the surface between the rightists in the Russian trade-union leadership, who perceptibly attached no value to the RILU, but could only proceed against it indirectly, at best by ignoring it, and Lozovsky, who continued to adhere to it unconditionally. After all, his important position in the Bolshevik Party rested entirely on its existence.¹²⁸ But in view of the reverses and defeats it suffered in international politics, the Stalinist 'Centre', despite its alliance with the Right, was obliged to manoeuvre so as to prevent the criticisms of the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition from gaining an appearance of justification. In practical politics, Stalin allowed Tomsy a free rein to conduct his trade-union diplomacy. But there was a limit to this, which was reached when the impression began to arise that 'liquidatory' concessions were being made. The sharp criticism of the TUC General Council made after May 1926 was intended to head off the pressure from the United Opposition. This change in attitude made it possible for Lozovsky to defend the existence of the RILU.¹²⁹

last ECCI Plenum that the organisation should be strengthened? Whenever an important RILU matter came up, he added, he had as a result to approach the Politbureau (RGASPI 534/3/238/50-1). It was not possible to establish whether anything ever came of Lozovsky's proposal for regular meetings with Bukharin.

- 128 The following case is a typical example. Lozovsky complained to the ECCI at the beginning of 1927 that he had been attacked in the communist fraction of the VTsSPS for a pamphlet in which he had subjected the TUC leaders to sharp criticism for their behaviour during the General Strike. Tomsy had said that his pamphlet was a call to split the Anglo-Russian Committee. But, he added, he had written nothing different in the pamphlet from what he had previously written in *Pravda* (and this had not been attacked – or perhaps more accurately the right of the party had not been able to attack it) (RGASPI 534/3/238/5-6).
- 129 Stalin sent a long telegram to Molotov at the beginning of June 1926 explicitly disagreeing with Zinoviev, whose demands, he said, would result in the collapse of the Anglo-Russian Committee. But it was unconditionally necessary to hold onto that body. On the other hand, Stalin also called for the work of the RILU and the NMM to be 'stepped up' and for 'their authority' to be increased. 'A number of practical proposals made by comrade Lozovsky should be approved, and complete agreement should be established between Tomsy and Lozovsky'. At the same time, the left wing of the General Council of the TUC should be subjected to 'ruthless criticism'. But this could only come from the Russian trade unions. A week before Stalin had similarly called for a pamphlet to be produced documenting the solidarity actions of the Russian workers with the British miners' strike and the General Strike. 'We need neither Grischa [Zinoviev] nor Lozovsky for this'. The pamphlet should be issued by the VTsSPS, he added (it was in fact published by the VTsSPS shortly afterwards). On the one hand, this would be a way of doing their revolutionary duty, and would allow the criticisms of the opposition to be rejected; on the other hand, all paths would remain open for the Russian trade unions to continue their manoeuvres

4 The Fourth Session of the Central Council

It was no doubt because of the blocked political situation described above that the meetings prescribed by the statutes were largely suspended at this time, apart from a session of the Central Council. In the first instance, however, the reaction of the RILU leadership to the threat to its existence was to extend the range of its bureaucratic activities. At the March 1926 session of the Central Council, its fourth, Nin presented a survey of the organisation's apparatus. The functions of the Organisation Section and the Eastern Section had been expanded greatly, while at the end of 1925 a Socio-Economic Section was set up to advise the RILU leadership. This section was in a manner of speaking a smaller RILU counterpart of the Comintern's own institute directed by Eugen Varga. It issued a journal in three languages from 1926 onwards under the title *Sozial-ökonomische Arbeiter Rundschau*. This would continue to appear until 1931. At the end of 1926, a Secretariat for Culture and Education was set up, and in March 1927 a Youth Commission was added.¹³⁰

An interesting propaganda expression of these extensive activities was the start made on producing encyclopedias of the international trade-union movement, even if they only appeared in Russian and thus did not have much resonance outside the Soviet Union. A small 'Encyclopedia of the International Trade Union Movement', alphabetically arranged, contained numerous articles on international trade-union associations, on the trade-union movement of many countries, on prominent trade unionists, and, from an international perspective, on the socio-economic foundations of the trade-union movement and the specific forms it took. The whole thing was supplemented by a number of statistical surveys.¹³¹ This was not the only reference publication. There was also a 'handbook of the Profintern' which was given the main title 'The World Trade Union Movement'.¹³² It was originally planned to consist of seven volumes, but

towards the TUC, while at the same time the RILU would continue to be held in reserve (Lih, Naumov and Khlevniuk (eds.), *Stalin's Letters to Molotov 1925–36*, New Haven, 1995, pp. 109 and 104).

130 *Protokoll der Vierten Session des Zentralrates* 1926, p. 17; *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 286–96; and the reports on the 1926 Central Council session in RGASPI 534/2/29.

131 Russian title: *Malaia entsiklopediia po mezhdunarodnomu profdvizheniiu. Pod redaktsiei M. Zelikmana*, Moscow, 1927.

132 *Mirovye professional'noe dvizhenie. Spravochnik Profintern. Pod obshchei redaktsiei A. Lozovskogo. Redaktsionnaia kolegiia: L. Geller, M. Zelikman, I. Levin, A. Nin, M. Rubinshtein*, Moscow, vols. 1–3, 1926, vols. 6 and 7, 1927, vol. 5, 1928.

was then extended to nine. The work contained detailed articles on each country, which gave a view of encyclopaedic breadth covering everything from the local economy to the historical development of each trade union, ending with a detailed presentation of the current situation. The contributions contained a considerable amount of factual data and were also provided with extensive bibliographies. Not all the planned volumes appeared, however. Volume 4, entirely devoted to the USSR, volume 8 on North and South America, and volume 9 on the trade-union internationals fell victim to Stalin's change of policy after 1928. The Russian trade-union movement was given an entirely new slant as a result of the dismissal of the 'rightists', while Nin, who was expelled as a Trotskyist in the spring of 1928, was responsible for most of the volume on the Americas, and finally the turn to a policy of splitting the trade unions required a completely new evaluation of all trade-union internationals, as we shall show in detail in a later section. The authors of these encyclopaedias came exclusively from the ranks of the employees of the RILU apparatus. All things considered, the encyclopaedias were a remarkable achievement, they were unique for their period,¹³³ and even today they can still be used advantageously. Meetings of the RILU Secretariat repeatedly addressed problems relating to work on these two encyclopaedias during this period.

At the same time, savings had to be made, and staffing levels could not be increased. All they could do was shift people around and give them more appropriate functions. The number of employees of the RILU, including members of the Executive Bureau, was 95 on 1 January 1926, in other words numbers had not increased since the first year of its existence. They had, however, been able to exchange less qualified for more qualified employees, according to the data announced at the Central Council session. Significantly, only 39.5 percent of the personnel were members of the party; no doubt they occupied the responsible positions in the organisation. (The social composition of the personnel also spoke volumes: 34.5 percent intellectuals, 50.2 percent office employees and 15.3 percent workers). Labour discipline was once again a problem. People sometimes arrived at their work too late without giving any reason, and they sometimes failed to sign in at the beginning or out at the end of their shift.¹³⁴

133 The two-volume *Internationales Handwörterbuch des Gewerkschaftswesens*, edited by Ludwig Heyde (Berlin 1931–2), was a much less ambitious project.

134 RGASPI 534/2/29/117–19. The Secretariat discussed this problem of labour discipline at the beginning of January 1924. It should certainly be viewed against the background of the difficult living conditions of the time (RGASPI 534/3/84). Tom Mann, who enjoyed another long stay in Moscow in connection with the Third RILU Congress, was able to gather some impressions of the 'working environment' in the RILU. He described it in letters home.

After 1926, the number of employees began slowly to increase, so that on the eve of the next RILU congress, on 1 February 1928, a total of 126 were on the books.¹³⁵

The Central Council only met once between the Third RILU Congress in 1924 and the Fourth Congress in 1928, at a fourth session held between 9 and 15 March 1926. The statutes prescribed a meeting every six months, so the failure to hold any sessions before this was a complete breach of the rules. To observe the statutes properly, the Central Council would have had to meet six times between the two congresses.

As usual, the Central Council session was closely linked with an Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI (the Sixth, between 17 February and 15 March 1926). At the ECCI Plenum, Lozovsky introduced an item entitled 'The Coming Tasks of the Trade Union Movement', and it was dealt with in the first few days of March, so that the relevant decisions had already been made before the Central Council of the RILU held its meeting. Lozovsky used his speech to repeat his public rejection at the 14th Party Congress of the idea that the Russian trade unions could unilaterally join the IFTU. He repeated the line of the Third RILU Congress, that there should be a *fusion* between the two internationals, but he gave it an altered twist by placing his hopes, not on the left wing of the IFTU, as the Russian trade unions had done, but on the prospects for the new mass trade-union organisations in Asia, particularly in China. Tomskey was also present at the meeting, and while repeating his commitment to the importance of day-to-day trade-union work and the need to continue the struggle for unity, he had to concede that they had reached an impasse in their negotiations with the IFTU. The IFTU did not want to proceed any further, and the RILU was unable to proceed any further. Only the Italian 'ultra-leftist' Bordiga, who represented a kind of one-man opposition

According to him, the working day lasted from 10 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, for six days of the week. His overall judgement was: 'The Profintern is run very efficiently' (MRC MSS 334/3/6).

135 This list of employees divided the 126 according to their section, but did not give their party affiliation or their social origin. There were twelve Executive Bureau members listed, 30 from the Correspondence and Translation Section, 10 from the 'Economic Section' (including the technicians), 13 from the Information Section, five technical assistants to the Executive Bureau, four in the Management Section, six in Accountancy, three in Distribution, six in the Organisation Section, five in the Library, four in the Archive, seven in the Socio-Economic Section, six in the Publishing Section, eight in the Eastern Section, one in the cultural secretariat, three in the Liaison Section and five in the Postal Section (RGASPI 534/1/101/4-8).

at the Plenum, repeated his fundamental opposition to any moves towards international unity.¹³⁶ One result of this ECCI Plenum, as we have already noted, was the establishment of a Trade Union Commission. Its purpose was to bring together the advocates of the different lines of approach, at least in an organisational sense.

The agenda of the Central Council session contained the following main items: the report of the Executive Bureau, the future tasks of the trade-union movement, the prospects for the Far East (covering Japan, China and the planned Pacific Conference), the Eight Hour Day, and finally questions of social policy.¹³⁷ The situation in other countries outside the Far East was discussed in committees. The whole session was dominated by the announcement of great progress in two areas of activity: Great Britain and the Far East. In Britain, this progress was mainly related to the work of the Minority Movement. The relationship between the Russian trade unions and the TUC in the Anglo-Russian Committee and the hopes for unity connected with this were not discussed at the session (and Tomsy absented himself). On the contrary, it was the impact of the wave of revolution that had swept China since 1925 which was seen as the most significant and promising development for the future of the RILU. As Lozovsky pointed out, in China there were either no Amsterdam-line competitors at all, or Amsterdam had only just started to put out its tentacles. As a result, the achievement of unity in that country did not involve negotiations with Amsterdam. They accordingly decided to send a delegation from the RILU to the third Chinese trade union congress which was scheduled to meet in the near future and while it was there to hold a conference of trade unions from the whole of the Far Eastern and Pacific region. The Australian trade unions had been pushing for this for some years, and now the RILU took up the idea as well.

The only person acting in a sense as an advocate for the Russian trade unions at the meeting was a member of the RILU apparatus, Lyss, who warned the Central Council that it was wrong to underestimate Amsterdam, and expressed his regret that there had been no attempt to evaluate the results of the unity campaign of the recent period. This was a clear, if indirect, criticism of the Executive Bureau, and it provoked immediate and sharp rejoinders from both Lozovsky and Nin. On the whole, however, it had to be admitted that the picture in Europe and North America was rather dismal. The traditional organ-

136 The whole debate is covered in: *Protokoll. Erweiterte Exekutive* 1926, pp. 305–475. Bordiga's contribution is on pp. 368–71. See also Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 612–14.

137 On the course of this session, see *Protokoll der Vierten Session des Zentralrates* 1926. See also Carr 1972, vol. 3, pp. 614–17.

isations and supporters of the RILU were either in decline or at most stagnating there. As a consequence, therefore, much of the work of this session was devoted to various detailed organisational questions.¹³⁸ Nin made an interesting proposal in regard to the trade unions in the Latin countries, particularly the CGTU, the only section of the RILU in Europe which could be a serious rival to its reformist counterparts. He called on the unions to place greater emphasis on their support functions. When there was a big strike, he noted, there was traditionally a big influx of members, but after the struggle died down the direction of the flow was reversed. This should be counteracted by organising 'strike funds and unemployment funds' as well as 'relief funds and co-operatives'. 'If we were to create a whole network of institutions of this kind', he added, 'the workers would no longer withdraw from our unions with such ease'. By speaking in this way, Nin was striking at a traditional taboo of revolutionary syndicalism. This idea of providing material support had always been denounced by the revolutionary syndicalists as a reformist policy which would tend to undermine 'direct action'. The demand to adopt the opposite point of view, summed up in the phrase '*Syndicalisme à bases multiples*',¹³⁹ had been one of the issues dividing the CGT before the First World

138 One of the many organisational problems which came up during this period was the question of how to liquidate the independent 'red trade unions' in Germany. As we saw earlier, these unions were in part products of the immediate postwar situation (this applies to the *Schiffahrtsbund* and the UdHuK) and in part emerged from the disillusionment over the failure of the 'German October' that set in at the end of 1923. The independent unions were represented by Schumacher at the Third RILU Congress. They had now all been dissolved and their members had generally joined the corresponding ADGB-affiliated organisations. There were, however, small minority groups which refused to follow this path and were therefore expelled from the KPD. They formed themselves into new independent organisations, including the German Industrial Association [*Deutscher Industrieverband*] and a German branch of the IWW. Neither of them was of great significance. (There is a survey of the process by which members of the various independent trade unions were transferred into the ADGB organisations in *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 162–4. See also Weber 1969, vol. 1, pp. 98–9; Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 258–9; and Rübner 1994, pp. 113–14). Significantly enough, this development, which played such a large part in the discussions at the Third RILU Congress, was not even mentioned at the fourth session of the Central Council. This was evidently seen as a chapter of history which was now complete, and therefore lay exclusively in the past. Nin spoke only in general terms of positive developments in Germany, and the German representatives at the session did not expand on this.

139 'A trade-union movement resting on several foundations'; resting, in other words, on a system of support and relief funds.

War. In the next few years after Nin made his proposal, the CGTU did make a few attempts to put it into effect, but it was not until the 1930s, after the CGTU had rejoined the CGT, that there was any serious move in this direction.¹⁴⁰

Declarations of the kind made by Nin were in essence an admission that the RILU had now moved far away from what was originally expected when it was set up, and that it would have to become a 'proper' trade union for the first time. When Lozovsky claimed at the same session that he could perceive a shift in the balance of forces 'in our favour', he was seeing things through very rose-tinted spectacles. He admitted that the picture for Europe and North America was not very favourable, but great gains were being made in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, which were of great importance, he claimed. It would soon appear very clearly, however, that these gains outside Europe would not dominate the course of international events.¹⁴¹

140 *Protokoll der Vierten Session des Zentralrates* 1926, pp. 64–5. As if to guard himself against traditionalist criticisms, Nin went on to say: 'Relief funds, co-operatives and powerful trade unions are not dangerous in themselves, as the anarcho-syndicalists claim. They only become dangerous when in the hands of reformists, since the latter exploit them in order to tame the energies of the working class. In our hands, in contrast, they only give greater strength to the instruments we have at our disposal in the struggle against capitalism'. This proposal was in fact a reaction by Nin and the other RILU leaders to the change in the balance of forces between the CGT and the CGTU during 1925–6. At first the CGTU had managed to bring the majority of the old organisation under its aegis, but now the situation was beginning to evolve to favour of its rival. See Dreyfus (1995, p. 133). See also Dreyfus, Kott, Pigenet and Whiteside (1997) for the historical context of this discussion, and see Dreyfus (1995, pp. 134–6) and Dreyfus (1996) for the attempts made by the CGTU to implement Nin's proposals.

141 Lozovsky made an admission that gave some indication of how difficult the RILU's situation really was: 'Nine tenths of the old cadres', he said, 'are against us. Only a small part of the socialist and syndicalist movements came over to the revolutionary movement'. In referring to the 'old cadres' he meant the trade unionists of the prewar generation, and, significantly, he did not care to mention how many of the cadres of the *postwar* generation stood beside the communists. More than 10 percent of them, certainly, but not a majority. He added: 'If we cannot understand how to educate new cadres, we shall not be able to grow, we shall not be able to increase our influence, and we shall not be in a position to satisfy the increasing needs of the masses' (*Protokoll der Vierten Session des Zentralrates* 1926, p. 27).

5 A Way to Gain New Influence? Initiatives Taken by the RILU Leadership in China and Other Countries

The RILU initially looked towards China with great anticipation. As early as May 1925, the second Chinese trade-union congress had decided that the newly founded General Chinese Trade Union Confederation should join it. But the Confederation was then immediately confronted with a test of its effectiveness, when a wave of strikes shook the south of China from May 1925 onwards, thereby creating the conditions in which the troops of the Guomindang were able to advance from Canton the next year to conquer the whole country. The third Chinese trade-union congress met in May 1926, and it now claimed to represent twice as many members as the previous year: a million instead of 500,000. These numbers were completely unrealistic, because they were not underpinned by any corresponding 'trade-union infrastructure', but they did at least express the growth in the use of trade-union-oriented forms of struggle. Growth in organisational strength was only achieved subsequently, at the cost of great efforts.¹⁴²

The first direct connection with China was established when a delegation of Russian trade unions, which also represented the RILU, visited that country between July and September 1925.¹⁴³ But the visit of a RILU delegation to the third Chinese trade-union congress in May 1926, which the Central

142 On the expansion of the Chinese trade-union movement in 1925–6, see Zhongxia 1975, pp. 108–88, and Chesneaux 1962, pp. 366–444. For the contemporary RILU view, see *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 248–51, and *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 9, September 1925. The China section of the latter publication was also issued in a separate edition in two languages, clearly because of the great interest there was in the subject. See *Rabochii Kitai. Sbornik Statei*, Moscow, 1926, and *Arbeiterbewegung und Revolution in China*, Berlin, 1925. The resolution of the Chinese trade unions in favour of joining the RILU is printed in facsimile on page 3 of the Russian version, and the Executive Bureau's reply of 18 May, in which the Chinese trade unions were welcomed into the organisation, is printed on pages 163–5. For the general course of development in China, which we do not propose to discuss here, see the standard work by Harold Isaacs (1961).

143 Pankratov 1972, pp. 260–3, and O.B. Gorodovikova, 'Pervaia delegatsiia Profinterny i VTsSPS v Kitae', *Problemy dal'nego vostoka*, no. 2, 1985, pp. 132–6. This delegation, which went on to visit Japan, published a report of its activities afterwards in Russian (*Rabochii Kitai v bor'be protiv imperializma. Otchet pervoi profsoiuznoi delegatsii SSSR v Kitai*, Moscow, 1927). A shortened German version was also issued: *Die Arbeiter Chinas im Kampf gegen den Imperialismus. Aus dem Bericht der ersten Delegation der Gewerkschaften der Sowjetunion nach China*, Berlin, 1927.

Council had intended to organise, did not in fact take place. Not until the second half of 1926, when the troops of the Guomindang began their Northern campaign, and the whole country was seized by revolutionary agitation, did the RILU achieve a presence on the ground, sending not merely representatives but advisers who gave guidance to the Chinese trade unions on the spot.¹⁴⁴ In February 1927, an 'International Workers' Delegation' arrived in China, consisting of two members of the Executive Bureau, Tom Mann and Earl Browder, the French communist Doriot and a Soviet functionary, Sydor Stoler.¹⁴⁵ It was even more important that Lozovsky himself spent the period from April 1927 to the end of July 1927 in China.¹⁴⁶ This was not just a question of general solidarity with the Chinese revolution. The RILU representatives attended two specific meetings. The first was the long-planned Pan-Pacific Conference, which was finally able to take place in May, in Wuhan, the stronghold of the Left Guomindang and the seat of the national government dominated by it, which also included the communist chairman of the trade unions, Su Zhaozheng, as Minister of Labour. The second was the fourth congress of the Chinese trade unions, which was held a month later in the same city.¹⁴⁷

In the meantime, however, the Chinese revolution had suffered its first severe setback. In the middle of April, Chiang Kai-shek's troops occupied Shanghai, where an uprising had taken place shortly before with the communist-led trade unions playing a considerable part, and organised a mas-

144 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, p. 42.

145 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, p. 42, Isaacs 1961, pp. 109–10 and 157–9, Carr 1978, vol. 3, part 3, pp. 737–9, and Tsuzuki 1991, pp. 221–35. There are also notebooks written by Tom Mann on his journey to China in the Tom Mann Papers (MRC MSS 334/8/2 and 3). The Soviet participant, Sydor Stoler, published a detailed report in 1927 in the *Pan-Pacific Worker*. See also the anecdotal impressions of the delegation's stay in Wuhan in May 1927 given by Milly Bennett, an American journalist working in the propaganda apparatus of the Wuhan government (*On Her Own. Journalistic Adventures from San Francisco to the Chinese Revolution 1917–1927*, Armonk-London, 1993). See, for example, pp. 193–7 for a description of the delegation's participation in the First of May demonstrations in the town.

146 Pankratov 1972, p. 272.

147 Immediately after his return, Lozovsky reported to the presidium of the VTsSPS on these two meetings. The report was printed in brief as A. Lozovsky, *Tikhookeanskaia konferentsiia i IV vsekitaiskii s'ezd profsoiuzov*, Moscow, 1927. A more detailed account is given in the volume of essays issued by him: *Rabochii Kitai v 1927 godu. Sbornik statei*, Moscow, 1928. The German version (A. Losowsky, *Revolution und Konterrevolution in China*, Berlin, 1928) is more in the nature of a survey.

sacre.¹⁴⁸ With this, Chiang Kai-shek and the right wing of the Guomindang gave notice that the alliance with the communists (and therefore with the Soviet Union as well) had come to an end.

Since the Chinese policy of the Soviet and Comintern leadership under Stalin and Bukharin was entirely based on the alliance with the Guomindang (which was fiercely opposed by the United Opposition around Trotsky and Zinoviev),¹⁴⁹ Lozovsky when he was in China naturally endeavoured to preserve this alliance, although he allowed his rhetoric to be infected temporarily by the revolutionary atmosphere (this applies particularly to his speech at the Pan-Pacific Conference, which will be examined later). His intervention at the fourth congress of Chinese trade unions (which took place from 19–28 June 1927) was dominated by this concern. He tried to stop the breach between the Left Guomindang and the communists, which was also looming, by appealing for moderation.¹⁵⁰ Isaacs writes that Lozovsky spoke in an ‘unusually radical’ manner.¹⁵¹ This comment can only be applied, however, to his opening speech, in which he warned of the danger of counter-revolution and called for a determined struggle against it.¹⁵² The proceedings of the congress showed as a whole that despite the ‘suppressed mood of rebellion’,¹⁵³ the communists continued to hold fast in principle to the alliance with the national government (in other words the Left Guomindang), whose leader Wang Jingwei also addressed the congress.

The Chinese trade unions also followed the unity line of the RILU, demanding the establishment of international trade-union unity in a resolution and sending an address of greetings to the General Council of the TUC, which they called upon to fight against British intervention in China. (A little later, in the middle of July, the Left Guomindang also broke with the communist party. This led to the reunification of the two wings of the Guomindang and finally forced the communists into illegality. They unsuccessfully tried to defend themselves against this with a series of uprisings). After his return to Moscow in the middle of August, Lozovsky painted an untroubled and optimistic picture of Chinese developments, which had little to do with the real situation, particularly stress-

148 See Chesneaux (1965, pp. 276–83) for the protest declaration of the Shanghai trade unions, who represented the backbone of the city’s communist party organisation.

149 See on this Broué 1997, pp. 425–43 and 457–60.

150 There is a survey of the fourth congress in Carr 1978, vol. 3, part 3, pp. 809–11.

151 Isaacs 1961, p. 263.

152 Printed in: *Pan-Pacific Worker*, no. 1, 1 July 1927, pp. 21–5. This issue, and the second issue, dated 15 July 1927, both contain further material on the Chinese trade-union congress.

153 Isaacs 1961, p. 263.

ing the strength of the workers' movement there.¹⁵⁴ This view of China continued to be maintained in Moscow for a long time, but the defeat of the Chinese trade-union movement and accordingly the failure of the RILU was a result of the erroneous strategy of the Comintern, which was followed by the RILU in all its twists and turns.

The growth of the Chinese trade-union movement could at least be used by the RILU to extend its sphere of operations in the Pacific region. The Central Council session of March 1926 had already set this as an objective. The Australians had also endeavoured to organise a Pan-Pacific conference to coincide with the third congress of Australian trade unions held in Sydney in August 1926. The RILU sent a representative to the congress, but the Chinese and Japanese delegates were not permitted to enter the country, so that all that happened was a brief discussion. In order to secure broader representation from the colonial countries, it was agreed that the proper conference should be held in May 1927 in Canton, which was still regarded as a stronghold of the Chinese revolution. The Australian trade unions declared their continued support for these endeavours.¹⁵⁵

When Lozovsky arrived in Canton in the middle of April, Chiang Kai-shek's *coup* had already happened. The delegates to the conference had to withdraw to Wuhan by a wide variety of routes, and it was opened there on 20 May. It lasted until the 26th of the month. According to the minutes, 32 delegates attended (although Lozovsky in his report to the VTsSPS gave a figure of 36). They represented eight countries in all (China, the USSR, Japan, Indonesia, Korea, France [the CGTU], the USA [the TUEL], and Britain [the Minority Movement]). They claimed a membership of over 14 million trade unionists, using the RILU's method of counting. A number of delegates had not been able to attend: additional Japanese representatives had been arrested, the Australians had not

154 Carr 1978, vol. 3, part 3, p. 812. Lozovsky had no doubt become completely committed to the line of limiting the revolution to retain the alliance with the Guomindang while in China. On his return to Russia he was confronted with the fact that the line had already changed. Nin, who had represented him in Moscow in the intervening period, asked him at their first meeting after his return what he thought of the slogan of establishing Soviets in China (as Trotsky and the opposition had demanded). When Lozovsky, still unaware of the change, replied that this was a dangerous error, Nin held up a copy of *Pravda* in front of him, in which the change of line had just been announced. (This anecdote is reported in the diary of Pierre Pascal, a Frenchman who lived in Moscow during the 1920s and was in contact with Nin. See Pascal 1983, p. 189).

155 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 61–3, and Farrell 1981, pp. 128 and 131–2.

received passports, and the Filipinos did not come because they did not believe the conference could take place, having by then received the first reports of the *coup* by the right of the Guomindang. Two delegates from Mexico had set out. After the first one discovered that the meeting was organised by the communists, he turned round and went home. The second delegate did arrive, but he was late. In view of the thin attendance, it was decided to call the meeting a conference, rather than a congress, as had been planned originally.

Lozovsky delivered the report on the main item on the agenda, 'The Chinese Revolution and the International Workers' Movement'. He underlined the immense importance of the events in China, but he placed them entirely in the context of the alliance with the Guomindang and the attempt to secure international trade-union unity. A special resolution set out a programme of workers' demands for the Chinese trade unions, such as the Eight Hour Day, the protection of workers' health, and the abolition of child labour, which if implemented would have constituted a gigantic improvement in Chinese social conditions, but gave little hint of the developing conflict between revolution and counter-revolution. Equally great significance was attached to the condemnation of the latest British attacks on the Soviet Union, which were to a considerable extent a reaction to developments in China. A call was issued for international solidarity, in view of the war danger threatening the USSR. The conference took a view on the situation in numerous other countries in a number of special resolutions, usually preceded by an exhaustive report on the situation of the trade-union movement in the country in question, and it called for support to be given to the struggle for the independence of the colonies.

What was most important about the conference, however, was that it created a new organisation. This was the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. The purpose of the Secretariat was to enable all the trade-union organisations of the Pacific region to co-operate in the fight against imperialism. It was not formally attached to the RILU. The latter organisation was not mentioned in its statutes. Instead, one of the tasks of the Pan-Pacific Secretariat was declared to be to provide support for the struggle for a unified trade-union international. In order to stress its united front character, an appeal was explicitly made to the non-communist national trade-union centres. Nevertheless, the Secretariat acted within the framework of the RILU, as was indeed clear from its composition – all its members belonged to RILU-affiliated organisations. Its headquarters were initially in Wuhan, and its organ, *The Pan-Pacific Worker*, began to be published there at the beginning of July. But the repression which set in after the break with the Left Guomindang meant that the Secretariat soon had to shift its headquarters and publishing centre to Shanghai, since the city included an extra-territorial international quarter, in which persecution – at

least the persecution of foreigners – was not carried out as thoroughly as elsewhere. One positive point was that soon the Filipino trade unions decided to join, followed in autumn by the recently founded Australasian Council of Trade Unions.¹⁵⁶

The hopes aroused by developments in China were not to be fulfilled, but for Lozovsky what was most important was to make sure that the RILU now took the initiative in other 'colonial and semi-colonial countries' as well. In August 1927, a new periodical, *Eastern and Colonial Bulletin*, began publication in three languages – English, French and German – and it continued to appear until the start of the 1930s.¹⁵⁷ A large number of delegations visited Moscow for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, and the RILU used this opportunity to take the first steps towards organising a merger of the Latin American trade unions (see below, chapter 8, section 2). It took a little longer to organise a specific form of work among what were known at that time as 'negro workers'. This was set in train by the fourth RILU congress, in the spring of 1928. In February 1927, the League Against Imperialism was set up as a communist front organisation for nationalist forces from the colonies and left social democrats such as Fimmen, and although the RILU did not have any

156 On the course of the Pan-Pacific conference, see the minutes, published as *Pan-Pacific Trade Union Conference. Bulletin of Proceedings*, Hankow, 1927, nos. 1–5, Lozovsky's publications mentioned in note 6, A. Lozovsky, *The Pan-Pacific Trade Union Conference, Hankow, May 20–26, 1927*, Moscow, 1927, and *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 283–5. See also Carr 1978, vol. 3, part 3, pp. 800–3; Farrell 1981, pp. 132–5 and Pankratov 1972, pp. 268–73. According to the conference's *Bulletin of Proceedings*, no. 1, p. 11, the following people were 'elected' to the Secretariat: Apletin, Ismailov and Andreichik (candidate) for the USSR, Su Zhaozheng, Li Lisan and Wang Hebo for China, Nishida and Matsuzaki (candidate) for Japan, Tom Mann and Harry Pollitt (candidate) for Great Britain, Browder and Harrison George (candidate) for the USA, Alimin for Indonesia, Chakosu for Korea, and Racamond and Delobelle (candidate) for France. Here, as in the case of the Executive Bureau of the RILU, very few of the above continued to work in the Secretariat subsequently. This was a core group which recruited extra members by co-optation. Milly Bennett (1993, pp. 249–56) describes Lozovsky's speech at the conference, his revolutionary rhetoric, and the resulting clash with the Comintern representative, Borodin. The latter was concerned that Lozovsky was playing into the hands of the opponents of the alliance, and he took care to soften Lozovsky's expressions in the final report. The TUC was also invited to take part in the conference, but it refused to do so owing to its left-wing political character. This refusal spared a TUC representative from the embarrassment of joining Tom Mann – who represented the Minority Movement – in the British delegation. On this point, see Marjorie Nicholson, *The TUC Overseas: The Roots of Policy*, London, 1986, pp. 104–5.

157 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, p. 289.

direct links with it, it gave the League its support since it also formed part of this orientation towards the colonial and semi-colonial countries.¹⁵⁸ But the League soon became unimportant, because the communists broke with their alliance partners during the move to the left after 1928.

The activities of the RILU in China, where the outlook promised success, were intended as a model to be followed in the other colonial and semi-colonial countries.¹⁵⁹ But the years 1926 and 1927 were not entirely dominated by the Chinese perspective. The defeat of the British general strike in May 1926 (although the miners continued to fight on for a few months afterwards) turned the Anglo-Russian Committee into a farce, a situation the Russian trade unions tried hard to conceal until the spring of 1927. This did not directly involve the RILU, but it still had an impact on it. The right wing of the TUC now sought to blame the communists and the Minority Movement for forcing the General Council into a position that made the call for a general strike unavoidable. There were a number of expulsions of trade-union members, and in particular disciplinary measures were taken against local Trades Councils. In May 1927, for instance, the communists were deprived of their majority position on the London Trades Council. What had the gravest consequences for the communists, however, was the decision to prohibit Trades Councils from joining the Minority Movement, and, conversely, to prohibit members of the Minority Movement from entering Trades Councils as delegates. The NMM was thus deprived of a large part of its mass base. It could now only recruit individual members, and it became increasingly isolated. Finally, after the turn to 'ultra-left' policies, it disappeared into insignificance. The TUC congress of September 1927, which had, as we have seen, confirmed the break-up of the Anglo-Russian Committee, supported these anti-communist proceedings by an overwhelming majority of votes. It was the same story at the following year's congress.¹⁶⁰

158 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 72–3.

159 It is not possible in the present work to give a systematic list of all the contacts made by the RILU, irrespective of their actual significance for its work. The RILU was able to achieve a certain influence in other parts of the colonial world, but it was very transitory. Let us simply say here that the RILU did have some contacts in the largest colony of all, India, but as in the case of the communist party, the revolutionary trade unionists were always in a clear minority, and no political or social crisis in India which was in the slightest degree comparable with that in China ever developed. There is some information on this subject in B.M. Zabarko and L.S. Cherniavsky, 'Profintern i razvitie profsoiuznogo dvizheniia v Indii', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 1, 1988, pp. 96–100.

160 See Clegg 1985, vol. 2, pp. 419–21; Macfarlane 1966, pp. 181–9; and Martin 1969, pp. 93–101. In discussing the course of events after 1927, Martin writes ironically that 'the Minority

The RILU section in the USA, the Trade Union Educational League, suffered a similar setback. In 1926, a communist-led strike by textile workers in Passaic (New Jersey) showed the kind of influence they could have on working-class strata previously neglected by the trade unions. The leadership of the strike was then handed over to the AFL, in accordance with the RILU's 'unity line', though it too was unable to achieve a breakthrough. This period was in general marked by defeats for the communists in the clothing industry, the 'needle trades' of New York, which were their actual stronghold in the American trade-union movement. A disagreement over a strike by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union in New York produced a veritable civil war between communist and mainly social-democratic trade unionists, in which the latter received the full support of the AFL. It ended with a communist defeat. Similarly, the Hillman leadership of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers now broke definitively with the communist party and the TUEL. The Furriers alone remained under communist influence. (For many years they were the only trade union in the USA that was led by self-proclaimed members of the communist party). In the case of the United Mine Workers, their leader John L. Lewis was able to drive the members of the 'progressive' opposition alliance out of most of the sections, by using all available methods. As early as the spring of 1927, therefore, Lozovsky raised the demand for the establishment of a new union of mine-workers, although he did not at that stage receive any support either from the communist trade unionists, who followed Foster, or from their 'progressive' alliance partners. The 'progressives' continued their campaign under the slogan 'Save the Union'. In any case, there was no doubt that communist influence in the AFL had melted away. It was the height of the postwar boom, and the communists did not help matters by absolutely refusing to organise factory unions in the mass production industries. Communism in the AFL was now merely a shadow of what it had been immediately after the end of the First World War.¹⁶¹

Movement changed from a catholic propaganda campaign into an organized ideological pressure group' (1969, pp. 99–100). It should not be overlooked, however, that the moves made against the communists were in large part a reflection of the pressure exerted by the Tory government in 1927 when it passed the Trade Disputes and Trade Unions Act. This law imposed very far-reaching restrictions on trade-union rights and repealed important parts of the Trade Disputes Act of 1906. It was, however, very seldom applied (perhaps because by its very existence it limited the actions of the TUC leaders) and its importance was therefore more symbolic than real. For that very reason it was repealed immediately after the Labour election victory of 1945. See Clegg 1985, vol. 2, pp. 422–3.

161 The situation is described from the RILU's point of view in *Die internationale Gewerk-*

Nor was any real breakthrough achieved by the RILU in the Balkans, despite its endeavours to gain a foothold by reorganising the trade unions there. The initiative in this field was actually taken by the IFTU, which saw an improvement in its prospects after the trade-union movements of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, dominated since the war by the communists, were largely destroyed by state repression (assisted subsequently by the self-destructive policies of the communists themselves). The communist trade unions in Bulgaria did succeed in 1926 in establishing a legal presence, though a very reduced one. But the IFTU undoubtedly enjoyed greater room for manoeuvre, and it used this to organise a Balkan Conference in April 1926. Attempts by the communist trade unions to gain invitations to this were rejected.¹⁶²

In Italy, on the other hand, new opportunities seemed to be emerging. The CGL leadership, under D'Aragona, had retreated more and more in face of the Fascist offensive after its break with the RILU and the split in the Italian socialists that followed shortly afterwards. Finally, at the beginning of 1927, it proclaimed the dissolution of the confederation. (In return, the Fascist state granted it the freedom to engage in discussion and research). This capitulation, which hit the IFTU very hard – it had always defended D'Aragona against communist criticism, despite increasing misgivings – provoked determined resistance from the communist and maximalist¹⁶³ trade unionists, who reacted by reconstituting the CGL as a clandestine body. Moreover, some members of the CGL leadership, who were already in exile, also condemned D'Aragona's action and established a foreign centre for the union, with the support of the CGT in particular. The communist-inclined groups within the country declared their readiness to attempt joint action. There were many discussions about this, and attempts were made to win over the IFTU as well to the idea. They were, however, unsuccessful. This united front initiative had already met with criticism from Lozovsky, who called for a quite different approach: to confront the IFTU and denounce its 'reformist treachery'. But he was unable to overcome the resistance of the ECCI secretary Humbert-Droz, who was also the secretary of the ECCI's Trade Union Commission, and who seized on this initiative by the

schaftsbewegung 1924–1927 1928, pp. 229–35. For later analyses, see Draper 1960, pp. 215–33; Foner 1994, vol. 10, pp. 11–30, 45–120 and 139–75, and Johanningsmeier 1994, pp. 214–38.

162 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 156–8, 190–3 and 207–9; and *Tätigkeitsbericht des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes über die Jahre 1924–1926* 1927, p. 17.

163 That is to say, the supporters of the PSI, which was internationally independent and stood somewhere between the Second and Third Internationals.

Italian communist trade unionists and succeeded in gaining the support of the Comintern leadership for it.¹⁶⁴

The Russian trade unions were pulling in one direction, and Lozovsky was pulling in the other. He was working on raising the profile of the RILU by creating new trade unions and consequently increasingly rejected any kind of united front policy towards the 'reformist' unions. In view of this conflict, and the resulting problems, the Trade Union Commission set up by the Comintern in March 1926 attained particular significance. Humbert-Droz was still the main authority within it, and he endeavoured to steer a middle course between Lozovsky and Tomsy.¹⁶⁵ He was a devoted follower of Bukharin, and as long as he could rely on his backing, he could use the Comintern to bar the way to

164 There are surveys of the dissolution of the CGL and the negotiations that followed between the various political tendencies in *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 185–90, and in two pamphlets by the clandestine 'communist' CGL within Italy dating from 1927 and 1928 and republished later: *Per una storia della Confederazione Generale del Lavoro clandestino. Documenti dell'anno 1927*: Guido Saraceno, *La Confederazione del Lavoro vive e combatte in Italia*, Milan, 1966, and *Per una storia della Confederazione Generale del Lavoro clandestino. Documenti degli anni 1927–1928: La polemica con l'Ufficio di Parigi e con l'Internazionale dei sindacati di Amsterdam*, Milan, 1966. See also Adolfo Pepe, Ornella Bianchi and Pietro Neglie, *La CGdL e lo Stato autoritario*, Rome, 1999, pp. 247–9 and 264–8. Humbert-Droz himself reported on the disagreements within the Comintern leadership in letters to Togliatti, who was in France. These are printed in *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 2 1983, pp. 377–80 and 401–2.

165 As he wrote on 8 April 1927 to Togliatti: 'the task you have left me is not easy. I constantly have to struggle with Lozovsky, who since the [ECCI] Plenum has followed the line of the Profintern, which you know, with an energy and consistency I have never seen from him before. Ever since I have chaired the Trade Union Commission, we have been unable to agree about anything. My work here consists in blocking the letters and resolutions of the Profintern and making sure that the opposite is decided in the Political Secretariat or the Presidium. Fortunately, Lozovsky's standpoint is not shared by anyone else and the Trade Union Commission is fairly homogeneous. Only Treint occasionally forms an exception, siding with Lozovsky. But what is most inconvenient is that Tomsy and Mel'nichansky, who could be of assistance, take the opposite line to Lozovsky, but fall into exactly the opposite extreme. Taking everything together, then, there are three lines in constant conflict ... Lozovsky conducts his splittist policy everywhere while Tomsy's line tends towards the liquidation of our parties' influence and of our revolutionary trade unions. Fortunately my relations with Bukharin and the Russian comrades in general have become much closer and more frequent in the course of the disagreements over France and over the trade unions' (*Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 2, 1983, p. 404). Another trade-union problem Humbert-Droz had to deal with in the first months of 1927 was a new unity initiative in France. The CGTU declared that it was ready to stop insisting on a fusion of both national centres on an equal basis and that it would accept the CGT as the centre

Lozovsky's new manoeuvres. (Moreover, the latter spent spring and summer 1927 in China and therefore faded out of the picture somewhat, while after his return problems of a completely different character emerged, which altered the course of the dispute). In any case, the differences of opinion over these questions could not alter the fact that the 'unity line' so intensively pursued since 1924 ended in practice in failure everywhere in the course of 1927. Neither in the IFTU nor within the trade-union movement as a whole was organised communist influence any greater than it had been in 1924, and indeed in some places it had grown less. This fact, together with the impact of the factional struggles within the Soviet communist party and consequently the Comintern, which led first to the defeat of the United Opposition around Trotsky and Zinoviev at the end of 1927 and then to the defeat of Bukharin and the 'Right' in the spring of 1928, formed the background to a radical change of course by the RILU, towards which Lozovsky had been steering for some time.

around which the movement could unify. The initiative failed, however, since the CGT was not prepared to give any guarantee that democracy within the trade union would be preserved after a merger had taken place (*Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 2, 1983, pp. 383–7, 392, 394–6, 409–11 and 667).

The RILU in the Context of the ‘Ultra-Left’ Policy of International Communism 1928–34

1 Trotskyist Opposition in the RILU? The Nin Affair and the Rift with the Dutch Leftists

The expulsion of the United Opposition from the communist party did not have a great impact on the RILU. Only for Lozovsky's deputy, the Catalan Nin, did it have direct consequences. He had already shown his sympathy for Trotsky when the latter came out in opposition in 1923. In this respect, he was no different from other former syndicalists, who had identified themselves politically with the Bolsheviks after 1917, but then come into conflict with the Comintern leadership over the ‘Bolshevisation’ process after 1924. Rosmer and Monatte in France were the most prominent examples of this. Since the end of 1924 they had been outside the PCF, having founded a journal in defence of their position, *La Révolution prolétarienne* (later on, most of this group took a different political path from Trotsky). In the USSR itself, Andreytchine was a prominent activist of the opposition. Victor Serge can also be assigned to this group. Two further examples can be mentioned: in the USA the Trotskyist opposition would be founded at the end of 1928 by James P. Cannon, an ex-Wobbly, and in the Netherlands the group around Sneeveliet and the NAS leadership would play an important role in international Trotskyism for a certain length of time.

Nin himself had somewhat surprisingly published a declaration in May 1925 in which he distanced himself from Monatte and Rosmer and from ‘Trotskyism’ in general, and declared his support for the party's ‘general line’.¹ Later on, however, two former leaders of the Spanish communist party revealed in their memoirs that Nin had confided in them that he had been compelled to issue this declaration. If he had not done so, he would have been dismissed.² Treint had in fact revealed Nin's attitude publicly at the beginning of April to the Fifth

1 ‘Erklärung des Genossen Nin’, *Inprekorr*, no. 73, 5 May 1925, p. 981.

2 José Bullejos, *La Comintern en España. Recuerdos de mi vida*, Madrid, 1972, pp. 60–2, and Julián Gorkin, *El revolucionario profesional. Testimonio de un hombre de acción*, Barcelona, 1975, pp. 137–41 and 165–6.

ECCI Plenum, thereby compromising his position.³ After this, Nin immediately approached Zinoviev with a request for an urgent discussion.⁴ The obvious result of this was Nin's declaration of May 1925. For him, as a political refugee, who could not return to a Spain governed by Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, dismissal from the RILU and the removal of his ability to engage in political action would have jeopardised his right to remain in the USSR, and it would have created a further problem too. For no European country was prepared to give him political asylum, a point which would later be demonstrated very clearly. Nin's 1925 declaration was therefore 'tactical' in character, as were some comparable statements made by Trotsky at this time. This assumption is strengthened by a short article written by Trotsky himself at the beginning of 1931, in which he stated that Nin had 'stood in the ranks of the opposition since 1923'.⁵

The declaration at least enabled him to continue performing his functions in the RILU for the present. At the fourth session of the Central Council, in March 1926, he spoke on behalf of the Executive Bureau practically on equal terms with Lozovsky. But when the factional struggle grew more intense in the summer of that year, with the formation of the United Opposition by Trotsky and Zinoviev, he decided to join it. He was a member of its international commission, a body set up to bring together oppositionists with international interests, who were mainly foreign employees of the various institutions handling international issues located in Moscow.⁶

3 RGASPI 495/163/153/25. The 'full report' on the session printed in *Inprekorr* (no. 63, 20 April 1925) includes this statement by Treint. ('We say that comrade Nin, who is concerned in our apparatus with the Red Trade Union International, and thus carries out a very responsible function, we say that he, who is himself a member of the Russian party and is aware of Rosmer's expulsion, sent a letter to Rosmer offering to provide him with information about the Russian party, in order to promote his campaign against the Communist International and the French party, a campaign which is conducted in the weekly periodical *La Révolution prolétarienne* edited by Monatte and Rosmer'). In the official minutes of the Fifth Plenum, published later (*Protokoll EKKI 1925*), the passage about Nin was deleted from the report of Treint's speech. It is ironic that Humbert-Droz, the Secretary of the ECCI, when visiting France in the middle of 1926, tried to persuade Rosmer and Monatte to rejoin the PCF. Although nothing came of it, he was later strongly criticised by the party for making the attempt (*Archive Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 2, pp. 380–1).

4 RGASPI 534/3/119/112.

5 'Andrei Nin. Vyslan Stalin i arestovan Berengerom', *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no. 19, March 1931, p. 35.

6 Serge, p. 216.

As far as the day-to-day affairs of the RILU were concerned, however, Nin's support for the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition had hardly any noticeable impact. On the one hand, the main plank of the opposition's platform related to internal Soviet problems. It was true that it was also concerned with the general orientation of the Comintern, and the RILU was now in practice subordinate to the latter. But the opposition's line was to strengthen the RILU, as for example in its call to abandon the Anglo-Russian Committee, and to take the offensive against the 'right' and thus against Tomskey and the VTsSPS leadership, so that for Lozovsky this pressure was perhaps not inconvenient. Measures of this type would directly work in his favour, even if he was a follower of Stalin. Nin's position as a Trotskyist was well enough known a year later for Trotsky to be able to utter the following exclamation, at a sitting of the ECCI Presidium on 27 September 1927, called to discuss his own removal from the Comintern leadership, which almost sounds like a premonition of Nin's later fate at the hands of the murderers of the NKVD: 'And what will you do with Comrade Nin, one of the best elements of the proletarian vanguard, an important staff member of the Red International of Labour Unions? What fate are you preparing for him? What measures will you take against him?'⁷

Lozovsky was very keen to hold onto Nin, probably for a mixture of reasons involving both political considerations and long personal acquaintance. This is shown by his actions after the expulsion of Trotsky and the most important opposition leaders at the 15th congress of the Soviet communist party in December 1927. Nin was not a leader of the opposition, but he was a member of the Soviet party because of his constant presence in Moscow, so his party cell – the cell covering the RILU apparatus – examined the case against him. He was expelled from the party in February 1928. Lozovsky endeavoured to keep the door open for Nin to return to the party, by sending letters both to him and to the Soviet delegation to the ECCI. He pleaded with Nin to recant so as to keep his position in the RILU, while arguing in his letter to the Soviet delegation that Nin was a foreigner who didn't really have a great understanding of Soviet affairs. These efforts were all fruitless. Nin made it clear that he would stick firmly to his views.⁸ Even so, Lozovsky did not prevent Nin from making a final public appearance before the fourth RILU congress in April 1928.

7 See the minutes of the sitting, published in Yu.T. Tutochkin and F.I. Firsov, "U vas gotov i prigovor". Kak Trotskogo iskluchali iz Kominterna', *Otechestvennye arkhivy*, no. 1, 1992, pp. 76–88, here p. 81. [English version: Trotsky 1980, p. 412].

8 The letters are preserved in RGASPI 534/3/337.

There was a series of expulsions of Trotskyists from the Soviet trade-union leadership, involving the chairman of the Seamen's Union, Ishchenko, the chairman of the Food Workers' Union, Krol', and the assistant chief editor of the VTsSPS organ *Trud*, Valentinov, but these events had no impact on the RILU. The three men had been spokesmen for the opposition in the VTsSPS, but the overwhelming majority enjoyed by Tomsy's adherents had made it certain that they had no chance of making any connections with the RILU, at least at the formal level, although they might have provided information. (Ishchenko had been a candidate member of the Executive Bureau since 1924, but he had never taken any practical part in its work). The expulsion of Krol', it is true, did have some impact. He was a member of the Executive of the Food and Drink Workers' International, so his removal affected Soviet membership of that body (this will be discussed below in more detail).

All in all, then, Nin's support for the opposition did not have a serious effect on the RILU, although he tried to make contact with other oppositionists, particularly at the fourth congress. There were also some expulsions at the beginning of 1928 of oppositional Soviet employees of the RILU apparatus, but these had even less impact on its work.⁹

The factional struggle in the Soviet Union had an echo in the Netherlands as early as 1927, when the NAS adduced the platform of the opposition as an additional justification for its break with the RILU. As we showed earlier, the NAS decided by a majority in 1922–3 to affiliate with the RILU, while a minority of the union withdrew to found its own separate syndicalist union, which affiliated with the IWMA. Although an NAS delegation took part in the Third RILU Congress, it did not formally join the RILU until its own congress took place at the end of 1925 (at which Nin was the RILU's official representative).¹⁰ From the very beginning, the NAS's membership of the RILU was dogged by the insistence of the latter's leadership that it cease to exist as an independent minority organisation or at least take a step towards this by associating itself closely with communist fractional work in the reformist trade unions. Tensions

9 The documents on the impact of the terror after 1936 contain some traces of what happened in 1928. The authorities took the opportunity to re-examine some of the expulsions done eight years previously. During this process, information emerged about persons who were able to recant in good time in 1928, or to prevent their expulsion in some other way. In 1936, of course, they had to provide adequate 'justification' all over again (RGASPI 534/8/372/37–9).

10 The NAS issued a pamphlet on its 1925 congress, which included the speeches made by Sneevliet, Nin and representatives of British and communist trade unionists. See *In Nieuwe Banen. Belangrijke redevrevingen van het N.A.S. congres December 1925*, Amsterdam, 1926.

were also caused by Moscow's attempts to win over Fimmen, which clashed with the NAS's antagonism towards him because of his role in the Transport Workers' Federation. Dutch communism, too, was riven by factional conflict, and the conflict between the NAS and the communist party was one element in this, alongside others. For all these reasons, NAS membership of the RILU was accompanied by constant disputes. It was not a coincidence that in 1924, at the third RILU congress, the NAS representative was the only person to express solidarity with the oppositional position of the independent German trade unions, which was represented by Schumacher.

In July 1927, after a long internal correspondence, the NAS officially broke with the RILU. It declared itself in solidarity with Trotsky, and it described his political explanation for Moscow's abandonment of the world revolution as correct. In the background, however, there stood the question of an independent revolutionary trade-union organisation, and indeed relations between Sneevliet and his adherents and Trotsky would continue to be bedevilled by this.

Moscow reacted to the NAS's defiance by organising an insignificantly tiny band of its supporters within it under the name 'RILU Liaison Committee', and this finally left the NAS to the accompaniment of a loud fanfare. Some of the syndicalists who had left in 1923 now returned to the NAS (1928), but this did not change its fundamental character as a trade union that was in a hopeless minority in comparison to the reformist trade unions. Sneevliet's attempts to gain international alliance partners also turned out to be unsuccessful. Before the break with the RILU, he had already tried to make contact with the MVS, which was also at loggerheads with it over questions of internal organisation, which were never definitively cleared up. The MVS, however, enjoyed a much higher level of influence than the NAS ever did, and its leadership was not interested in breaking with the RILU over questions that did not concern it directly. Sneevliet then attempted for a short time to form an alliance with the German Industrial Association [*Deutscher Industrieverband*] (DIV), the umbrella organisation for the small revolutionary trade-union groups which had survived from the period of independent oppositional trade unions in Germany. This was intended to be the first step towards an international regrouping of revolutionary trade unions, clearly with the model of the IWW in mind. In view of the lack of influence of the DIV, exacerbated by disputes within the organisation itself, the two sides did not advance beyond holding a few meetings and issuing a few joint proclamations in 1928.¹¹

11 On the break between the NAS and the RILU, see *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewe-*

2 The Radicalisation of the RILU's Course by Lozovsky and the Sanctioning of the New Approach by the Fourth Congress

There is no doubt that these manifestations of opposition did not really challenge the position of Lozovsky and the RILU leadership. Moreover, as events unfolded, the occasional emergence of Trotskyist tendencies in individual RILU sections also failed to make any impact. The opposition naturally made much more headway in the Comintern, where Bukharin, and therefore Stalin as well, were confronted by Trotsky and Zinoviev, who both enjoyed great international prestige. But once the opposition on the left side of the political spectrum had been defeated, the first cracks in the alliance between Stalin and the Right became apparent, and this provided appropriate conditions for Lozovsky to go onto the offensive with the aim of greatly extending the RILU's room for manoeuvre.

A precedent for this arose in 1927 in the USA. In view of repeated setbacks there, Lozovsky seized the opportunity of a conflict that developed within the United Mine Workers in the first few months of that year to raise the question of establishing a new trade union, though he did not at first meet with any support.¹² The intention was to limit this step to the particular situation which prevailed in this branch of industry, where the union apparatus, around the president of the union, John L. Lewis, intervened brutally against any kind of deviation in the organisation. When a lower-ranking party leader dared to question the party's general orientation towards the AFL in 1927 in a similar manner to Lozovsky, he was promptly sent to Moscow 'to complete his education' by taking a course at the Comintern's Lenin School.¹³ In the strikes of 1927 in the US mining industry, communists still fought in conjunction with the wider opposition movement for the leadership of the United Mine Workers.

gung 1924–1927 1928, pp. 182–4. The NAS angle is presented in: E. Bouwman, *De zevenjarige oorlog tegen de C.P.H. om den uitbouw van het N.A.S.*, Amsterdam, 1927. There is information on the attempts of the NAS and the DIV to get together in 1928 in the DIV organ *Kampf-Front*. In general on the German Industrial Association, see Otto Langels, 'Die Revolutionären Industrieverbände. Gewerkschaftspolitik in der Weimarer Republik zwischen Freien Gewerkschaften und KPD', *Archiv für die Geschichte des Widerstandes und der Arbeit*, no. 10, 1989, pp. 41–61.

12 Johanningsmeier 1994, p. 244. Lozovsky had already raised this question in previous years, for example at a sitting of the Executive Bureau on 14 November 1925, when Foster had spoken about the difficult situation of the TUEL, which he said was in practice illegal within the AFL (RGASPI 534/3/114/84).

13 Draper 1960, p. 293.

To explain Lozovsky's initiative here, it should be noted that the situation in the USA was entirely different from that in Europe. In the USA, only a small minority of the labour force was organised in trade unions, and even then predominantly in unions affiliated to the AFL. In many branches where mass production prevailed, and in the 1920s these were typical of the American economy, there was a complete absence of trade-union organisation. The AFL refused to organise in those branches, because they could only be organised on an industrial basis, and the organisation would predominantly comprise immigrants, to whom the AFL often took a negative attitude, as it saw itself as an organisation for 'Americans'.¹⁴ These characteristics of the American situation were, of course, known to Lozovsky, but he did not return to his proposal in the course of 1927.

He initially tried to strengthen the influence of the RILU by extending its range to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. Thus the spring of 1927 saw the emergence of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. At the end of 1927, the project of a Latin American trade-union organisation took a big step forward. A large number of delegations had arrived in Moscow to attend the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. During the months of November and December, the Executive Bureau arranged several meetings with Latin American trade unionists. The result was that on 11 December 1927 representatives of revolutionary trade unions from Argentina, Brazil, Ecuador, Colombia, Cuba, Venezuela and Uruguay subscribed to an appeal for the formation of a federation of Latin American trade unions.¹⁵ But, like North America,

14 The American communist party worked entirely outside the AFL in these branches of industry when there was an appropriate opportunity. In the mid-1920s, for instance, it gained a dominant influence in the Auto Workers' Union. This had been expelled from the AFL in 1918 when it was under socialist leadership as an industrial trade union, because it had come into conflict with the craft unions' claim to organise in the automobile industry. But this union remained marginal, since the American automobile industry consistently refused to negotiate with trade unions (even though the AFL endeavoured to push for this in the 1920s). Hence the AWU was at most a group that made propaganda for the idea of trade unionism, and in the 1920s it had only a few thousand members. (See Foner 1994, vol. 10, pp. 121–38, on these points).

15 *Die internationale Gewerkschaftsbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 63–5. According to the memoirs of one participant in these discussions, there was some resistance to the idea at the beginning. They could not set up a federation of this kind simply because Comrade Lozovsky had invited them to do so, it was said. But Lozovsky then convinced them with the argument that it was not just his personal proposal. He had the backing of millions of members of the Russian trade unions and the RILU (Heitor Ferreira Lima, *Caminhos percorridos*, São Paulo, 1982, pp. 77–9).

this part of the continent too had a peculiar character. Trade unions were on the whole weak, and they were split into a number of currents, under strong anarchist influence, while reformist tendencies of the most varied type existed, but were weak, with the exception of Mexico, where they could count on the support of the government. Amsterdam too was only marginally present, despite its best efforts, and it was concentrated on one single country, Argentina. The AFL, in contrast, possessed an important instrument for influencing the Latin American trade-union movement in the shape of the Pan-American Federation of Labor (PAFL), in which the second leading force was the Mexican trade-union federation, the CROM.

None of these endeavours by Lozovsky amounted to a fundamentally new orientation for the RILU, however. This would come a little later, emerging from a series of steps taken at the end of 1927. When Bukharin reported on the work of the Soviet delegation in the Comintern to the 15th Party Congress, the congress which expelled the United Opposition, he only touched on the RILU, though he did call upon it to strengthen its work and to ensure that the VTsSPS played a more active role in it. He did, however, introduce a number of elements of the future ultra-left turn: social democracy, he said, was developing more and more towards the right, the class struggle was getting sharper, and in this situation the united front must be applied first and foremost 'from below'. Lozovsky skilfully took up all these points in his thorough presentation of the great efforts made by the RILU, above all its establishment of the Pan-Pacific Secretariat in Asia. In Europe, he considered that one could perceive that the reformist trade unions and social democracy were becoming part of the government machine. The masses would move to the left, he added. Lominadze, who had acted as Stalin's representative in China for a while, questioned some of Lozovsky's views about that country, while two representatives of the VTsSPS, Gei and Mel'nichansky, assailed him directly, mainly to rebut his open and hidden criticisms of the work of the VTsSPS. The latter in particular charged him with forgetting the setbacks they had suffered in Europe in his enthusiasm over revolutionary perspectives in Asia. All in all, though, the result of this congress for the RILU amounted to nothing more than the introduction into the resolution on international work of a phrase on the lines set out by Bukharin earlier.¹⁶

The Ninth ECCI Plenum, held from 9–25 February 1928, had far greater consequences for the RILU, since here the trade unions were a separate agenda

16 *Piatnadtsatyi s'ezd VKP 1927* 1961, vol. 1, pp. 623–58, 693–705, 777–81, 787–93 and vol. 2, pp. 1439–40. The minutes of the congress also include a personal declaration by Lozovsky on the relation of the Australian trade unions to the Pan-Pacific Secretariat, in which he replied to a criticism made by Bukharin in his closing address (vol. 2, pp. 1593–5).

item. It appears from the sparse material published on the session – this was the second Plenum without any published minutes – that there was a fierce clash between Lozovsky on the one hand and Togliatti and Humbert-Droz on the other in the Trade Union Commission (after Lozovsky's keen supporter Heckert had already clashed with Tomsy during a preparatory meeting).¹⁷ Lozovsky had now discovered the idea of the 'organisation of the unorganised', in other words people who were not part of any trade-union organisation. He contrasted this with the struggle for trade-union unity. The report on the work of the Commission was delivered by Humbert-Droz, and he stated quite openly that 'some comrades' had demanded that they change to a tactic of splitting the trade unions. Some concessions were made to this in the final resolution: reformism's move to the right was mentioned, and it underlined the significance of strikes which could become political even though they started for minor economic reasons. The resolution called for more attention to be paid to the lower levels of the trade unions. Only in the case of the USA was an exception made in view of the situation there. The possibility of independent organisation was conceded, but this should not affect the branches where AFL trade unions already existed. The overall picture was that of a slight move to the left, even if this was merely a concession to the pressure exercised by Lozovsky. In any case, it was clearly stated that the task of this Plenum was to prepare for the impending congress of the RILU. But it was above all Lozovsky who had influence over the way the RILU congress was organised, not the Comintern apparatus, which was in the hands of Bukharin and Humbert-Droz.¹⁸

The fourth RILU congress took place in Moscow between 17 March and 3 April 1928.¹⁹ For the first time it was held in advance of a congress of the

17 The subject of this clash between Tomsy and Heckert, according to a later report by the latter, was the question of the 'independent leadership of economic struggles', in other words the calling of strikes without and against the trade unions, which would soon be a major issue. This new form of action was sharply condemned by Tomsy. (Fritz Heckert, 'Grundprobleme der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung am Vorabend des VII. Kongresses der Komintern', *Rede auf der Kommission zur Prüfung der Gewerkschaftsarbeit der Kommunistischen Parteien*, 13 August 1934 [SAPMO NY 4007/17/ page 177]).

18 Only the report by Humbert-Droz and a speech by Thälmann in the Trade Union Commission were published, in addition to the resolution finally passed by the Plenum (*Inprekorr*, no. 26, 10 March 1928, pp. 487–97). In the Tasca Papers there are also extracts from Togliatti's speech in the Commission, in which he engages in fierce verbal exchanges with Lozovsky. They were published in *Annali della Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli*, vol. 8, 1966, pp. 441–4.

19 The minutes of this congress were published as *Protokoll über den 4. Kongress 1928* [and in part in English as *Report of the Fourth Congress of the R.I.L.U.*, London, 1928]. The congress

Comintern. Until 1928, the basic orientation of the RILU's work had been decided by the Comintern. But since the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, which finally took place in July and August, would be dominated by Bukharin, it was not an accident that the order of events was reversed this time. To proceed in this way would make it easier to discipline the Russian trade-union leadership around Tomsy, which in the reverse case would perhaps have been able to rely on decisions by the Comintern congress.²⁰ From a superficial point of view, the RILU appeared to be prospering. 421 delegates attended, claiming to represent 47 countries.²¹ The membership figures given in the Executive Bureau's report were 13,862,209 for affiliated organisations – including 2.8 million for China – and 2,874,600 for minorities in Amsterdam unions. In addition, there were 368,230 members of revolutionary organisations, many of them in Latin America, which for various reasons had not been able to join the RILU. But these figures were extremely questionable.²²

Humbert-Droz and Tomsy attempted to mark out contrary positions in their welcoming speeches, but it was immediately clear who would set the tone for the congress when Lozovsky made his main report on the 'Results and Tasks of the International Trade Union Movement'. The capitalist offensive, he said, was unleashing a process of radicalisation, while the reformist trade unions were becoming increasingly intertwined with capitalism. It was now necessary to form a 'united front from below' and a concentration on the unorganised, who were more revolutionary than the members of trade unions. The RILU's task was 'to conquer the masses' not the 'apparatuses'.²³

It was, however, typical of a situation which had not yet been fully clarified that unambiguous conclusions were not in fact drawn from all this. Much was

materials (and the minutes of meetings of the Presidium and the commissions of the congress, and the list of delegates) are preserved in RGASPI 534/1/64–134.

20 Trotsky reported in a circular letter of June 1928 sent to members of the opposition from his place of exile in Alma Ata that in a preparatory meeting of the Russian delegation to the congress Tomsy had tried to bring in proposals for altering the congress resolutions which had come from the Politbureau, and the majority of the delegation had been inclined to support him. But Lozovsky threatened to resign from the RILU if they agreed to Tomsy's amendments. The matter was referred to the Politbureau which then made sure that the delegation voted in line with Lozovsky's wishes. ('Rumors from Moscow', in Leon Trotsky, *The Challenge of the Left Opposition 1928–1929*, New York, 1981, pp. 120–6, here pp. 125–6).

21 *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 473–4.

22 *Die internationale Arbeiterbewegung 1924–1927* 1928, pp. 309–14. These figures brought the RILU effortlessly above the IFTU, which had roughly 13 million members at this time.

23 *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 33–89.

implied rather than stated openly. Lozovsky distanced himself from the earlier unity initiatives taken towards Amsterdam, but a representative of the VTsSPS pointed out that these steps had been taken in accordance with resolutions passed by previous congresses. The current negotiations with the Scandinavian trade unions were declared by Lozovsky to be a special case, since neither the Finns nor the Norwegians were affiliated to the IFTU (he 'forgot' to mention that the very purpose of these initiatives had been to build a bridge to the IFTU).²⁴ Instead of criticising Tomskey directly in his speech he mounted an attack on the German rightists Brandler and Walcher.²⁵

It was certainly a surprise to many delegates when Nin took the floor to express his disquiet about the way Walcher was being made a 'sacrificial victim' (in order to avoid criticising the Russian rightists). Nin was not a delegate, but he had been a member of the Executive Bureau until then, and that was the body which bore responsibility for the RILU's actions until the congress met. He chiefly attacked the 'course to the right' of the Russian trade unions, in comments which provoked a furious response from the VTsSPS delegates, but which undoubtedly suited Lozovsky, since they saddled the VTsSPS with responsibility for past policies, including those that had failed. Nin said nothing about the fate of Trotsky and his supporters in the Bolshevik Party at this trade-union congress, but it was clear from the replies of his opponents that everyone knew what his political affiliation was.²⁶

24 See the corresponding passage in the resolution on Lozovsky's report, *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, p. 531 [English: *Report of the Fourth Congress* 1928, p. 21].

25 He read out extracts from Walcher's discussion paper on international unity (see chapter 7, section 3), describing him as 'a very good comrade and my personal friend', but he suggested that in practice he wanted the RILU to capitulate to Amsterdam (*Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 74–5). Walcher was in Germany at that time, and he sent a telegram protesting against this distortion of his views. He also asked for his telegram to be made public at the congress, which of course did not happen (RGASPI 534/1/128/1). Another leading German rightist attacked by Lozovsky was Lieberasch. He had published a critical article on the former in *Trud*, the organ of the Soviet trade unions (*Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, p. 61). Brandler at least was able to make a short speech in reply to Lozovsky, since he was in Moscow, where he had been forced to remain since 1924 on the orders of the Comintern (*Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 209–12).

26 Nin's speech is printed in *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 179–83. For the replies to Nin by two Soviet delegates (Iaglom and Kozelev), one Bulgarian (Rosov), one Italian (Germanetto) and Lozovsky himself, see pp. 183–5, 223–4, 228–30, 235–6 and 275–6. Iaglom let fall in his reply the comment that the VTsSPS had always followed the resolutions of the RILU in its pursuit of unity, together with an appeal to Lozovsky to confirm this. Lozovsky, however, did not say anything on the subject. Instead he quoted a CC circular of January

The resolution on Lozovsky's report could be interpreted in different ways.²⁷ It was true that it purported to be a clear shift to the left. But there was no explicit renunciation in it of the old unity line. Instead it declared that it had become 'more and more unlikely' that the necessary conditions for it would obtain. A special resolution was passed on the situation in the USA. Only here was the line of new trade unions proclaimed to be the proper course, at least in places where the AFL was not a factor, although even here the language used was somewhat weaker than Lozovsky originally demanded.²⁸ The line of trade-union work set by this congress also involved placing particular emphasis on the colonial and semi-colonial countries. The resolution on this subject referred to the exceptional prospects opening to the RILU in those areas, and in this connection the creation of the Pan-Pacific Secretariat and the endeavours to unify the Latin American trade unions were emphasised. Lozovsky also raised the question of making greater efforts to organise the 'negro workers'.²⁹

The International Propaganda Committees, which were now renamed International Propaganda and Action Committees (IPACs), were also affected by the practical abandonment of the unity perspective. For the first time, they were dealt with merely in passing. Lozovsky did not mention them in his main report, and they were not given a separate place on the agenda. A member

1926, issued shortly after the 14th Party Congress, which rejected all rumours about joining the IFTU. The Mexican artist Siqueiros, who was a delegate to this congress, reports in his memoirs that Nin's speech provoked an 'immense tumult' and made a great impression on Diego Rivera, his fellow-artist and comrade at the time (who took part in the congress as a guest). That was the beginning of Rivera's Trotskyist sympathies (David Alfaro Siqueiros, *Me llamaban el Coronelazo*, Mexico, 1977, p. 236). The direct contacts Nin was able to make during the congress with Latin American trade unionists were still more important. (See Alejandro Gálvez Cancino, 'Julio Antonio Mella: Un marxista revolucionario', *Críticas de la economía política*, no. 30, 1986, pp. 101–51, here p. 118).

27 'Ergebnisse und nächste Aufgaben der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung (Thesen zum Bericht des Genossen Losowsky)', *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 522–38 [English: 'International Trade Union Movement: Summary, Next Steps', *Report of the Fourth Congress* 1928, pp. 9–29].

28 Compare Lozovsky's remarks in *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 76–7 with 'Die Aufgaben der Anhänger der RGI in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika', pp. 617–23 [English: 'The Tasks of the R.I.L.U. Adherents in the United States', in *Report of the Fourth Congress* 1928, pp. 135–42]. On the discussions in the American party about Lozovsky's intervention, see Draper 1960, pp. 282–99.

29 For the discussion see *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 388–452. For the resolution see pp. 538–52. The congress resolved to call a special meeting to examine the 'organisation of the negroes' (p. 479).

of the RILU apparatus, Slutsky, simply made a number of cursory references to them in the context of the agenda item dealing with questions of organisation.³⁰ What the change amounted to was made clear by the resolution on this point: 'The IPACs must be transformed into international centres guiding organisational activities in the various industries'. There was no more mention of their significance for the fight of the Russian trade unions to gain admission to the ITSS. The only thing to be done with the ITSS now was 'to expose them'. The IPACs, on the other hand, must now take 'a direct and active part in economic disputes'.³¹

In addition to dealing with these questions of the RILU's overall orientation, the congress also dealt with numerous individual problems affecting trade-union work in different countries and with organisational matters of a general character (such as trade-union educational work and the trade-union press). Special resolutions on women and youth were passed. One spectacular and climactic moment in the proceedings of the congress was a special 'Celebration of the 50th Birthday of Comrade Lozovsky'. Monmousseau gave a detailed account of his life (excluding certain sensitive points such as the two occasions on which he broke with the Bolsheviks) and this was followed by further congratulatory speeches. In his reply, Lozovsky endeavoured to appear unaffected by these words of praise and to strike a fairly humorous note. He ended his speech with the words which are worth remembering in view of his murder by Stalin in 1952: 'There is only one banner in the world for which it is worth fighting, only one banner for which it is worth dying – the banner of communism'.³²

At the fourth congress, therefore, the RILU entered on a course which definitely led it away from its policies of the previous few years. But it still continued to display a certain degree of openness towards 'non-party people'. The presidium of the congress thus decided to include four or five non-communists in the Central Council. The most prominent of these were the Englishman Alex Gossip and the Australian Jock Garden. Both of them, however, ceased to co-operate with the RILU a year later, after ultra-left policies had become completely dominant, and they therefore did not appear at the sixth session of the Central Council at the end of December 1929.³³ The statutes were altered at

30 *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 354–7.

31 *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 570–1 [English: *Report of the Fourth Congress* 1928, p. 73].

32 *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 422–5.

33 Gossip also gave a speech at the fourth congress (on the economic situation in Great Britain, *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 147–8). See also his later remarks in the organ of the NMM, saying that he found the congress very impressive. He was particularly

this congress to increase the size of the Central Council to 95 members and 18 candidates, so that a session of the Central Council was in practice a mini-congress. Once formed, the Central Council had then to elect the Executive Bureau, which consisted of 19 members and 13 candidates.³⁴ Nin was of course not included in these attempts to secure the 'non-party' character of the RILU. The Latin American delegates passed a 'Declaration' during the congress, to which the Spaniards also added their names, condemning Nin's 'Trotskyist slanders'. The fourth congress thus marked the end of his career in the RILU.³⁵

gratified by the way the role of the NMM was recognised by everyone there ('The R.I.L.U. Congress. Impressions of Red World T.U.C.', *The Worker*, 13 April 1928).

- 34 For the decision to include non-party people, see RGASPI 534/1/89/25–6. For the change in the statutes and the election of the Central Council, see *Protokoll über den 4. Kongreß* 1928, pp. 517–18. Curiously, the names of members of the Central Council and the Executive Bureau members elected by it are only given in the Russian edition of the minutes (*IV.kongress Profintern 17 marta–3 apreliia 1928 g. Stenograficheskiï otchet*, Moscow, 1928, pp. 588–9 and 592). These lists are only of limited value, as a number of those elected soon left the Council. Tomskey was a member of the Executive Bureau, and other representatives of the VTsSPS were also elected to the Central Council along with him. He was later removed from both bodies because he lost his position in the Russian trade unions. The Czech Hais was removed because of his oppositional attitude. Lozovsky was naturally re-elected as General Secretary of the RILU. The fifth session of the Central Council took place immediately after the end of the fourth congress. Its tasks were to elect the Executive Bureau and to deal with a number of other organisational matters. (Materials on the fifth session are preserved in RGASPI 534/2/43–4).
- 35 This procedure had of course been organised in advance. The Latin Americans were only used as a front because one of Nin's functions had been to maintain contact between the RILU and Latin America. A Peruvian delegate later made this point clear in his memoirs, when he described the resistance the Latin American delegates initially offered to the suggestion that they pass a strong condemnation of Nin. According to his account, the text of the declaration was then altered to make it appear to be, first and foremost, a declaration of solidarity with the Russian working class (Julio Portocarrero, *Sindicalismo peruano. Primera etapa 1911–1930*, Lima, 1987, pp. 146–7). Nin was expelled from the AUCP (B) at the same time but he remained stuck in Russia. He was unable to return to Spain until the fall of Primo de Rivera in 1930. On his precarious survival during those two years – he continued to live in the Hotel Lux – see his correspondence with Maurín, who was living in exile in Paris, and had also been expelled in 1929 ('Correspondència Nin-Maurín', *L'Avenç*, no. 50, June 1982, pp. 24–35, no. 51, July–August 1982, pp. 30–9 and no. 166, January 1993, pp. 24–7). Oddly enough, the German edition of the RILU journal *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale* continued to include the names of both Nin and Maurín in its list of leading international collaborators published on the back cover.

3 The New Line is Applied across the Board

The implementation of the new international trade-union policy now went ahead at full speed. The Sixth Comintern Congress³⁶ also marked a shift to the left – even though it was still formally directed by Bukharin, who gave up his function of chairman of the Comintern immediately afterwards – and it thereby legitimated the positions already adopted by the RILU congress.³⁷ There was also a particular event at that time in Germany which Lozovsky was able to use to toughen up the RILU's line. In November 1928, a labour conflict broke out in the iron and steel industries of the Ruhr, the Ruhr Iron Dispute (Ruhreisenstreit). The employers had attempted to impose a cut in wages, which was rejected by the trade unions. They then replied by locking out the steelworkers of the Ruhr. The conflict was eventually ended by state

36 See Broué 1997, pp. 480 and 483–5 on this congress, at which Bukharin proclaimed that a 'Third Period' of postwar history had now set in. After the revolutionary crisis of the immediate postwar period between 1918 and 1923, and the stabilisation of capitalism between 1924 and 1927, class struggles had now entered a sharper phase. This concept, like a number of other slogans proclaimed by the Sixth Congress, became one of the watchwords governing communist policy after 1928. At the time, Bukharin and his supporters were still trying to limit the extent of the move to the left. Later in the year, however, they were finally excluded from power by Stalin's apparatus, which then had its hands free to engage in a comprehensively ultra-leftist policy both in the USSR – with collectivisation and ultra-rapid industrialisation – and in the Comintern. As a result, the eighth congress of the Russian trade unions (10–24 December 1928) in effect deprived the 'rightist' leadership around Tomsy of its power (Tomsy was removed from office entirely shortly afterwards). This happened primarily for reasons of Soviet internal politics, but for the RILU it also had the result of removing a possible obstacle to the further intensification of the ultra-left line in the international sphere.

37 The resolution on 'the international situation and the tasks of the Communist International', for example, runs as follows: 'In view of the united front of the bourgeois state, the capitalist organisations and the reformist trade union bureaucracy, whose joint endeavours are directed towards throttling strike movements by compulsory arbitration, our main task is to unleash the energy and initiative of the masses and in favourable situations also to conduct the struggle against the will of the reformist trade union bureaucracy' (*Protokoll. Sechster Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, 17. Juli–1. September 1928, Bd. 4, Thesen, Resolutionen, Programm, Statut*, Hamburg, 1929, pp. 13–43, here p. 31). See also Lozovsky's speech at the congress, in which he defended the line of the RILU congress and made fierce attacks on the 'rightists' and their 'sabotage' (*Protokoll. Sechster Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Internationale, Moskau, 17. Juli–1. September 1928, Erster Band, Die internationale Lage und die Aufgaben der Komintern. Der Kampf gegen die imperialistische Kriegsgefahr*, Hamburg-Berlin, 1928, pp. 366–81).

arbitration. For the KPD, headed by Stalin's faithful supporters Thälmann and Neumann, and for Lozovsky in particular, this confirmed everything they had said earlier in the year: under social-democratic leadership, the trade unions had become pure organs of the capitalists and their state, and the unorganised workers had risen in revolt against this situation, thereby showing themselves to be more militant than the members of the reformist trade unions.³⁸

In some countries, which had been considered until then as being in a special position, independent trade-union organisations had already been founded. In the USA, for example, a National Miners' Union was set up in September 1928,³⁹ and in Mexico in January 1929 a new central union confederation was

38 On this conflict in the Ruhr and on the role of the KPD in it, as well as the 'lessons' the party proclaimed afterwards, see Larry Peterson, 'Labor and the End of Weimar: the Case of the KPD in the November 1928 Lockout in the Rhenish-Westphalian Iron and Steel Industry', *Central European History*, no. 1, March 1982, pp. 57–95, and Werner Müller, *Lohnkampf, Massenstreik, Sowjetmacht. Ziele und Grenzen der "Revolutionären Gewerkschafts-Opposition" (RGO) in Deutschland 1928 bis 1933*, Mannheim, 1988, pp. 77–81. In general on the radicalisation of the KPD line in the strikes of 1927–8, see Heer-Kleinert 1983, pp. 292–305. During these months, the KPD was in fact more concerned with intra-party power struggles, which were sparked off in part by accusations of corruption and Thälmann's attempts to cover it up. The so-called Conciliators, who had co-operated with the Thälmann leadership until then, but counted as allies of Bukharin, were now conclusively marginalised, and at the end of 1928 Moscow gave the green light for the expulsion of the Right, the supporters of Brandler and Walcher. At the turn of the year, the latter founded the KPO, or Communist Party Opposition, which brought together many of the old trade-union cadres of the party, who came largely, but not exclusively, from the DMV. (See on this Weber 1969, vol. 1, pp. 199–223 and Müller 1988, pp. 56–84). The KPO organ, *Gegen den Strom*, gave exhaustive information on trade union questions, and took a definite line on the theses advanced by Lozovsky and the RILU leadership, criticising them in detail and demonstrating with ease the wishful thinking that underpinned them. For the post-1929 period, *Gegen den Strom* provides a source of information and a corrective to the RILU's own presentation of events.

39 Some weeks after the National Miners' Union had been founded, the National Textile Workers' Union was set up, covering a branch of industry neglected by the AFL. Then, after a tug-of-war between various tendencies in the party, it was decided to set up a trade union for clothing workers as well, and this came into existence at the end of the year under the name of the Needle Trade Industrial Workers' Union. But union organisations, such as the ACW and the ILGWU, already existed in this branch, so what was happening here was without doubt the formation of a parallel trade union. This was followed in 1929 by the establishment of a number of other red trade unions (in addition to the Auto Workers' Union, which already existed). In September 1929, the TUEL was converted into a revolutionary federation of unions, in direct opposition to the AFL, under the name 'Trade

established, relying for its justification on the decisions of the fourth RILU congress, under the name *Confederación Sindical Unitaria de México* (CSUM).⁴⁰ Now, however, it was indicated that this form of action was universally valid. Stalin set the tone, in one of his rare direct interventions in Comintern discussions (the occasion for this was the decision to reaffirm the Thälmann leadership's hold over the KPD). This is what he said: 'A situation is quite conceivable in which it may be necessary to create parallel mass associations of the working class, against the will of the trade union bosses who have sold themselves to the capitalists. We already have such a situation in America. It is quite possible that things are moving in the same direction in Germany too'.⁴¹

The so-called 'Strasbourg Conference' on strike strategy was held in the middle of January 1929 to put into effect this overall shift in policy. In actual fact, it took place in Berlin. It was attended by delegates from Central Europe and Great Britain. The objective of the conference was to examine the strike struggles of the previous year with a view to applying the new tactic more generally: strikes, it was said, should be conducted 'independently', that is to say, solely by strike committees elected by the strikers themselves, without and indeed even against the reformist trade unions. It was also expected to demonstrate that the unorganised workers had immense potential for the class struggle. These conclusions were resisted by the British delegate, Tanner, who had never been a party member, though he had always worked alongside the party in the Minority Movement. He did not seek a confrontation, limiting his comments to the objection that the situation in Great Britain was different. The new line was thus greeted with overwhelming approval at the conference.⁴²

Union Unity League'. This turn of events was a personal blow to Foster, in view of the many years he had spent rejecting any kind of parallel trade unionism. But he was prepared to operate this new policy, since he expected that in return the Comintern would hand over the party leadership to him. This hope was only partially fulfilled. (See Johanningsmeier 1994, pp. 240–6 and Foner 1994, vol. 10, particularly pp. 253–70).

40 This confederation brought together the numerous independent individual trade unions and the communist fractions which had influence over various branches of the CROM. Its establishment was preceded by a fierce factional struggle in the party. Until then, the 'right' party leadership, under the influence of Bukharin's Comintern, had directed all its efforts to working within the CROM. (See Arnaldo Córdova, *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, vol. 9 (*En una época de crisis*) [1928–1934], Mexico, 1980, pp. 66–71).

41 J.W. Stalin, 'The Right Danger in the German Communist Party. Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. December 19, 1928', in Stalin, *Works*, vol. 11, 1954, pp. 307–24, here p. 315.

42 The documentation on the conference is preserved in RGASPI 534/2/110–12. The agreed theses were published as *Streiktaktik und Streikstrategie. Resolution der Straßburger Kon-*

Some months later, Tanner published an article in the organ of the NMM on the question of the unorganised workers and the strike committees, indicating that he agreed with the new line adopted at what he now explicitly referred to as the 'Berlin conference', thus abandoning the previous conspiratorial secrecy around it. Tanner's article was, however, devoid of any of the new 'ultra-left' rhetoric, and it was formulated in such a way that its conclusions appeared to be the result of old trade-union experience.⁴³

Germany was now calling the tune. The new method of approach was tested out there in numerous strikes and in the presentation of independent lists for factory council elections. Minor successes or even actual setbacks for the new approach were re-described as great victories, and the expulsions of communists from the trade unions which were provoked by its application were taken as confirming its correctness. Finally, at the end of November 1929, the first national congress of the Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (RGO) was held in Germany. The organisation created as a result had a somewhat ambiguous name, since the 'opposition' it referred to could also relate to opposition *within* the ADGB. Nevertheless, the whole political line, with its call for 'an independent leadership of economic struggles' and for the organisation of the unorganised workers, was directed towards a head-on confrontation with the trade unions. In terms of organisation, too, a parallel structure was created, in competition with the ADGB, at first just by transmitting RGO instructions downwards, and later by establishing 'red unions' in individual branches of industry, which were described, entirely inappropriately, as 'unity unions'. This only happened in a few areas, however.⁴⁴ Incidentally, this 'RGO course' was treated as a model by the RILU. It was not accidental that the expression 'Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition' was adopted in many countries where before 1929 no separate RILU organisations had existed.

This new policy was already long established before 25 October 1929, Black Friday, when the Wall Street crash initiated the world economic crisis with

ferenz, Berlin, 1929. See Martin 1969, pp. 112-13, for the British objections. Martin says that the conference may have taken place in Berlin or Strasbourg. It took place in Berlin, and this was an open secret, since the DMV distributed a pamphlet on the conference in which Berlin was also mentioned as the meeting-place (*Die Richtlinien Losowskis für die Ende Januar in Berlin abgehaltene Reichsparteiarbeiter-Konferenz der KPD zur Kenntnisnahme und Verwendung*, Stuttgart, 1929.) The TUEL gave an odd title to its own publication of the conference resolution: *Problems of Strike Strategy. Decisions of the International Conference on Strike Strategy in Strassburg, Germany, January 1929*, New York, 1929.

43 'Strike Strategy - A Vital Problem. Jack Tanner Opens Discussion', *The Worker*, 5 April 1929.

44 See the detailed account by Müller (1988).

its millions of unemployed and its mass poverty. It had nothing to do with the economic crisis, although the crisis was subsequently used to justify the new trade-union line (which corresponded to the line of Social Fascism at the party level, in other words the consistent rejection of any united front with social democracy, which was condemned as the left wing of Fascism).⁴⁵ The new line involved the abandonment of principles of communist trade-union work which had been followed for many years, and it therefore met with strong resistance, which led to a series of organisational conflicts.

In Germany, the resistance offered to the new line by experienced communist trade-union cadres could be broken by disciplinary measures taken within the framework of the political party. Outside Germany, however, in the two European countries with regular trade unions affiliated to the RILU, developments took a different course.

There had been years of petty conflicts in Czechoslovakia. These had flared up repeatedly over questions of organisational structure, although they were also determined by varying political perspectives. They had never before been pushed to the edge of a break with the RILU, but now the change in the political line gave the quarrels a new and more threatening aspect. After the Fourth RILU Congress, the MVS leadership in Czechoslovakia had initially allowed itself to be forced into making a 'self-criticism', to the effect that it had lost contact with the masses, who were now alleged to be much more radical than it. Then, after the Sixth Comintern Congress, the new course began to find encouragement from within the communist party and an open clash developed between the leading group of the MVS around Josef Hais and his son Arno Hais, on the one hand, and the supporters of a turn to the left, on the other. There were constant conflicts between the two groups from the autumn of 1928 onwards. A minority within the MVS, led by Antonín Zápotocký, endorsed the criticisms levelled against the two Haises. The tension was increased by a number of defeats suffered by the MVS trade unions in strikes during the first months of 1929.

The fifth congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, in February 1929, saw the triumph of the Stalinist wing. Leading trade unionists lost their seats on the party's leading bodies. After that, it was not long before the two groups in the MVS confronted each other directly. This happened at a meeting of the MVS executive which took place three weeks before the next MVS congress. Having been deprived of its position in the party, the Hais group now replied in kind to its opponents in the MVS. On 19 March, it occupied the MVS

45 See Broué 1997, pp. 492–3.

headquarters and called in the police for protection against the leftists, who were trying to storm the building. (The courts later upheld the claim of the Hais group to retain possession). A final attempt to reach an agreement was made on 26–27 March at a meeting of the two factions with representatives of the Executive Bureau in Dresden, which had been called by the RILU. A compromise was proposed by the Executive Bureau, which Zápotocký accepted immediately, while the Hais group signified that it might be able to do likewise. It came to nothing, however, because Hais and his supporters could not accept a compromise while the KSČ was continuing to work against them in the background. But the holding of a new party congress, as demanded by the Hais group, with the aim of replacing the leftists who had taken power in February, was unacceptable to the RILU. The split was therefore unavoidable. But Josef Hais had the majority of the MVS leadership behind him. This allowed him to continue in control of the existing organisation, while the KSČ had to set up a new central trade-union organisation in May, which went under the official name of the 'Revolutionary Centre of Industrial Unions', but came to be called simply the Red Unions. According to government statistics, this organisation even had a slight preponderance over the MVS, as far as membership numbers were concerned (88,000 against 76,000). The MVS held a congress in December, but there was no longer a place for it even in the highly fragmented trade-union landscape of Czechoslovakia. In July 1930, it rejoined the social-democratic trade-union federation (the OSČ), from which it had separated in 1922. There is no doubt that these developments weakened the RILU considerably, although the 'removal of the opportunists' was presented as increasing the movement's political strength.⁴⁶

In France, the move to the left by the CGTU found graphic expression in a change in the statutes made in September 1929, at its fifth congress. In the long internal debate which had preceded the union's decision to join the RILU, even PCF members had always stressed its independent character. This view was now branded as 'opportunist', and the leading role of the party was firmly anchored in the union's statutes. The new stress on the party's leading role,

46 On these events in Czechoslovakia, see McDermott, pp. 206–35. See also Fritz Heckert's report on a journey to Prague in December 1928, which describes the escalating confrontation between the two groupings on the eve of the split in the MVS (SAPMO 12/708/4/379–82). Significantly enough, an analysis by the cadre section of the Comintern, conducted in the context of the purges of 1936, showed that almost all the trade union cadres of the KSČ were replaced after the Sixth World Congress (Alexander Vatlin, 'Kaderpolitik und Säuberungen in der Komintern', in Hermann Weber and Ulrich Mählert (eds.), *Terror. Stalinistische Parteisäuberungen 1936–1953*, Paderborn, 1998, pp. 33–89, here p. 63).

and the perspective advanced at the fifth congress of a broad radicalisation of the masses, which the CGT, it was said, was bent on opposing, hand in hand with capital, were the two main disputed points around which a minority within the CGTU articulated its position. It was joined in this by the existing grouping around the journal *La Révolution prolétarienne*, founded by Rosmer and Monatte in 1925, out of which the *Ligue syndicaliste* had emerged in 1926, as a minority active in both the CGTU and the CGT. The opposition at the CGTU congress represented 146 trade unions against the 919 which supported the new line.

This opposition was very heterogeneous. There were regional trade-union leaders from the provinces, who wanted to run their fiefdoms without interference from the headquarters in Paris, and whose strong local bastions were at first quite impregnable. There were also groups of oppositional communists, whose activity in the party was determined by their opposition to the process of Stalinisation. The opposition movements within the trade unions joined together to set up what was called the Committee for the Independence of the Trade Union Movement [*Comité pour l'indépendance du syndicalisme*], and in the autumn of that year the committee started to issue a newspaper, *Le Cri du peuple*.

Its most important initiative was an attempt to restore the unity of the French trade-union movement. It managed to win over to its side representatives of some independent trade unions, which were mainly active in the civil service, and a number of CGT leaders who were critical of Jouhaux. Dumoulin was one of these. After the decisive role he had played in the 1921 split, he had withdrawn from the foremost ranks of trade-union leaders because he was disappointed by what he saw as the excessively reformist course steered by the CGT in the subsequent years. In November 1930, the 'Appeal of the 22' was issued, calling for the reunification of the two confederations on the basis of the Charter of Amiens. This was not the only step they took. Local unity committees were set up, in an attempt to anchor the idea of unity more solidly through a broad campaign in the trade unions.

But the move to unity was immediately rejected by both established trade-union leaderships, which considered that their claim to exercise control was threatened by the signatories of the appeal, precisely because of the prominence of the latter, and the long trade-union experience they represented. The CGTU leaders flatly proclaimed that they would not fall into this 'Social Fascist trap' (*CGT unique, CGT de trahison* was the slogan). Jouhaux's attitude was equally negative, but his tactics were more skilful. In the certain knowledge that his proposal would be indignantly rejected by the CGTU, because they were in principle opposed to any kind of unity with the 'Social Fascist traitors',

he induced the CGT congress of September 1931 to vote for a generous offer of reunification (but within the CGT framework). At the same time, the congress agreed not to take any disciplinary measures against the supporters of the '22' within the CGT.

Two months later, the CGTU congress dismissed all unity initiatives that were not based on the positions adopted by the RILU. At the same time, the CGTU apparatus began to drive out the supporters of the 'Appeal of the 22', where it was able to do so. The RILU itself had already intervened directly in this sense. In August 1931, the spokesmen of the minority were invited to Moscow for discussions with the Executive Bureau, where they were exposed to concentrated fire from the RILU's supreme administrative body. The RILU leaders spoke openly of the existence of a 'state of war'. Lozovsky made the leadership's views clear in his final address, making this threat: 'You have made your choice. The French proletariat will stand in judgement over you'.

So the unity movement collapsed. One additional reason for its failure was Dumoulin's sudden declaration that he was ready to become a socialist deputy, thereby betraying the fundamental principle of trade-union independence. A number of CGTU trade unionists concluded from the different way the two federations had reacted that there was no longer anything to be gained by staying in the communist trade-union federation. In the CGT, one could at least express one's opinion, and it would be possible, they thought, to force Jouhaux to implement the promises made by successive congresses. Hence a significant section of the CGTU minority moved over to the CGT, with the result that the CGTU became still more monolithic.

In addition to the minority grouped together in the Committee for the Independence of the Trade Union Movement, there was an additional opposition grouping, the Teachers' Union, and it could even rely on the support of a federation, although it was much weaker than the corresponding CGT trade union. The Teachers' Union was connected with the French Trotskyists, who rejected any kind of association with people like Dumoulin, who had fought against the revolutionaries in 1921. On this basis, at the beginning of 1930, what was called the *Opposition unitaire* was formed. Its central objective was not unification with the CGT, but a change in the CGTU's line. The leaders of the CGTU and the RILU attacked this group even more fiercely than the others, because, as a 'Trotskyist' group it was clearly regarded as more dangerous. It was, however, invited to the Executive Bureau's Moscow discussion on the situation in the CGTU in August 1931. The four delegates appointed by the Teachers' Union had no passports, however, so they had to travel illegally, to Berlin in the first instance. The MEB in Berlin found that it was not able to provide the necessary false papers for them to make the rest of the journey. After their return to France they received

a telegram from the RILU saying that it did not have the means to provide for them. The Teachers' Union would itself have to make the arrangements. In view of the long history of illegal journeys between Paris and Moscow, in which even Lozovsky had participated, it could hardly have been made clearer that their presence in Moscow was regarded as unwelcome. In any case, the *Opposition unitaire* remained a marginal phenomenon because it was affected by the internal divisions within French Trotskyism. It was only able to muster 30 votes at the CGTU congress of November 1931, against 165 for the '22' and 1,324 for the CGTU leadership.⁴⁷

By and large, the implementation of the new line by the RILU took a parallel course in the other countries in which it operated.⁴⁸ Great Britain proved to be the sole exception. In spite of the criticism expressed by Tanner at the 'Strasbourg Conference', the Minority Movement, by now a shadow of its former self, did implement the change, up to and including the transition to an 'independent leadership of economic struggles'. But in view of the high level of organisation and the traditions of the workers' movement in Britain, the formation of independent trade unions would have ended in a ridiculous fiasco. Only in two minor instances, where there had already been long-standing organisational conflicts, was this step undertaken: part of the clothing workers' movement⁴⁹ and the Scottish mineworkers. Communist trade-union activists

47 On the CGTU in general during this period, see Dreyfus 1995, pp. 136–7 and 149–50. On the 'Appeal of the 22', see Vincent Pr  sumey, 'Un mouvement pour l'unit   syndicale au d  but des ann  es trente', in Pierre Cours-Salies and Ren   Mouriaux, (eds.), *L'unit   syndicale en France (1895–1995). Impasses et chemins*, Paris, 1996, pp. 71–8 and 193–4. On the reaction of the CGT leadership to this, see Bernard Georges et al., *L  on Jouhaux dans le mouvement syndical*, Paris, 1979, pp. 111–18. Developments in the CGTU are presented from the point of view of the former leader of the Teachers' Union in *Le syndicalisme dans l'enseignement*, n.d., vol. 3, pp. 83–201. On the *Opposition unitaire*, see also Jean Rabaut, *Tout est possible! Les 'gauchistes' fran  ais 1929–1944*, Paris, 1974, pp. 59–69, and Trotsky 1967, pp. 379–89. A document which claimed to be the minutes of the Executive Bureau's sittings in the middle of August 1931, but gave very little space to the contributions of the representatives of the minority, was published in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, no. 17–18, 30 September 1931.

48 We shall simply refer the reader here to accounts of these developments in two other countries: Bert Cochran, *Labor and Communism. The Conflict that Shaped American Unions*, Princeton, 1977, pp. 43–81, and Rafael Cruz, *El Partido Comunista de Espa  a en la Segunda Rep  blica*, Madrid, 1987, pp. 119–20 and 142–8.

49 The 'United Clothing Workers' Union' set up in the spring of 1929 initially recruited the majority of the London ready-made clothing producers. But six months later, after the failure of a strike and the expulsion of its charismatic leader as a 'Social Fascist', it had lost

practised a kind of passive resistance towards the constant pressure from the RILU and they remained in organisations affiliated to the TUC, though they were completely isolated within them.⁵⁰

The RILU did not succeed anywhere in establishing new, revolutionary trade-union associations with real mass influence. The new 'revolutionary trade union oppositions' (RTUOs) always had fewer members than the corresponding communist fractions had had in the trade unions before the split. In the few cases where the RILU had control over already existing national trade-union centres, their influence declined sharply. By 1933, when the various 'revolutionary trade union oppositions' of many countries announced an 'Anti-Fascist Workers' Congress', the RILU had in practice been reduced to 'nothing more than a communist party, or a part of a communist party, only under another name', as Trotsky put it at the time.⁵¹ The result of this was that where RTUOs had been established the communist trade-union fractions gradually ceased to exist. For the original function of the communist fractions, which was to associate communists together against the reformist trade-union bureaucracy, became obsolete with the establishment of the RTUOs. They could therefore be absorbed or merged into them.⁵²

In spite of a number of highly spectacular strike actions by the RTUOs, which took place in cases where they could rely on their own apparatus, it was impossible to transform partial successes into continuous organisational development. In any case, on the whole the actions of the RTUOs were marked by an increasing number of reverses and a general isolation from the mass of trade unionists.⁵³ The RILU tried to react to this situation with various

its influence and become a mere sect in the East End of the city. (See Shirley W. Lerner, *Breakaway Unions and the Small Trade Unions*, London, 1961, pp. 85-143).

50 Martin 1969, pp. 122-78 and Macfarlane 1966, pp. 243-74.

51 In 'The Economic Onslaught of the Counterrevolution and the Unions', *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1932-1933)*, New York, 1972, pp. 169-72, here p. 170. He added: 'This organisation does not bind the party to the unions; on the contrary, it separates the party from the unions. Being, because of its small numbers, absolutely incapable of replacing the trade unions in the sphere of mass action, the RILU is at the same time incapable of influencing them from outside, because it confronts them with hostility as a rival organisation'.

52 Heckert would later make this point in a speech intended for internal consumption only, made during the transition to the Popular Front tactic. See 'Grundprobleme der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung am Vorabend des VII. Kongresses der Komintern', *Rede auf der Kommission zur Prüfung der Gewerkschaftsarbeit der Kommunistischen Parteien*, 13 August 1934 (SAPMO NY 4007/17/182-3).

53 From a somewhat different angle, Heckert had the following to say, in the 1934 speech mentioned in the previous note: 'In the majority of countries, at least half the communists

organisational manoeuvres. Tactical corrections of 'errors' were expected to smooth away difficulties, without casting doubt on the overall correctness of the line.

4 **The Sixth Session of the Central Council, the Fifth RILU Congress and the Eighth Session of the Central Council**

The task of the sixth session of the Central Council, which met from 15–24 December 1929, and which was no longer attended by 'non-party people', was to strike an interim balance of the turn to the left.⁵⁴ The most important item on the agenda was 'The Lessons and Prospects of Economic Struggles'. As expected, it confirmed the correctness of the course the RILU had followed towards 'independent leadership' and the establishment of parallel organisations. The treatment of organisational problems in a number of different countries where the shift to the new course had given rise to special difficulties (the USA, France and Czechoslovakia) also occupied a considerable amount of time. New Soviet representatives needed to be elected to the Executive Bureau, owing to the removal of Tomskey and the 'right' from the Soviet trade-union leadership. For the first time, the campaign to prepare for the Fifth RILU Congress, which had been summoned to coincide with the RILU's Ten Year Jubilee⁵⁵ in the summer of 1930, was given a separate agenda item of its own. This marked an unadmitted contradiction to the allegedly shining perspectives advanced elsewhere. The purpose of this item was to organise a propaganda campaign which would compensate for the ever weaker organisational (and also political) basis of the RILU. In earlier years, it had not been necessary to mount a special campaign to mobilise the RILU's supporters for a congress.

In the meantime, the RILU congress had entirely taken on the character of a mass assembly for declamatory utterances, rather than a place for discussing the political line. This was shown by, among other things, the way delegates were now chosen. In Germany, for example, a list was provided,

are outside the trade unions, both the revolutionary and the reformist ones. This is confirmed by the representatives of all the parties ... And what proportion of those who have stayed in the trade unions are actually carrying out trade union work?' (SAPMO NY 4007/17/181).

54 The minutes were published as *Protokoll der Sechsten Session des Zentralrates der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Abgehalten in Moskau vom 15. bis 24. Dezember 1929*. The underlying materials are in RGASPI 534/2/45–60.

55 As reckoned from the foundation of the ITUC in July 1920.

not by the RGO, but by the secretariat of the KPD, which undoubtedly followed Moscow's instructions in drawing it up. The list contained a fixed and very detailed formula for the selection of delegates: they were divided according to regions, branches and factories, and there were provisions for specific quotas of young people and women. Each district party leadership then had to provide the appropriate names.⁵⁶ In the British case, therefore, this procedure was described as the 'allocation' rather than the 'election' of a delegation to the congress. There was some unease in the Executive Committee of the Minority Movement about the rigidity of this procedure, reflecting the old feeling that the movement should be an organisation with a certain amount of independence and with traditions of its own, instead of a mere section of the RILU.⁵⁷

This fifth (and last) congress of the RILU, which met from 15–30 August 1930, was even more impressive in appearance than the previous one. 538 delegates attended (an increase of 117) from 60 countries (an increase of 11).⁵⁸ There was

56 The instructions are printed in Hermann Weber (ed.), *Die Generallinie. Rundschreiben des Zentralkomitees der KPD an die Bezirke 1929–1933*, Düsseldorf, 1981, pp. 145–9.

57 The minutes of the Executive Committee sitting of 25 April 1930 give this item of the agenda the title 'Allocation of the Delegation'. A letter from Moscow was read out, instructing the committee to send only 25 delegates, and to make up the delegation according to a fixed formula, taking into account industry, gender and age. The members of the delegation would then be 'elected' by district party conferences (a more appropriate word would be 'confirmed'). 'The reading of this letter was followed by a serious discussion, especially in view of the fact that our activities had been conducted on the basis of the reports brought back from the Sixth Session of the Central Council ... putting the line of an unrestricted delegation elected by workers in the factories and the trade unions ... It was nevertheless decided that the most recent instructions should be followed and that immediate steps should be taken to bring the campaign into harmony with the line'. In regard to the 'allocation of delegates', an internal NMM bulletin states that: 'the lists were established in accordance with the relative importance of the industries in the respective districts and the relative strength of the Minority Movement. Since these lists cannot be regarded as binding, the comrades in each individual district must take care to apply these proposals as far as possible' (Tanner Papers, Nuffield College, Box 1, File 2, Sheets 107–8 and 125).

58 *Protokoll des v. Kongresses der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale. Abgehalten in Moskau vom 15. bis 30. August 1930*, Berlin, 1930 and RGASPI 534/1/135–97. Hardly anything was more revealing of the real situation of the organisation than the fact that for the first time no thorough report on its activities since the last congress could be presented in printed form in any of the Western languages. It was possible to discover two Russian reports, *Mirovye revoliutsionnoe profdvizhenie ot iv do v kongressa Profintern 1928–1930*, Moscow, 1930, and *Mirovoi krizis. Polozhenie i stachechnaia bor'ba mezhdunarodnogo proletariata*,

a correspondingly large number of speeches of greeting, and announcements were made about a series of auxiliary organisations, which were either already in existence or in the process of being founded. This all gave the impression that the RILU was still continuing to grow in size and influence. The political perspective also contributed to this, with its concentration on making an irreversible break with the reformist trade-union movement. The main report called for a strengthening of the independent character of the 'revolutionary trade union oppositions'. Admittedly, lip-service was paid to the need to work in the reformist organisations. A warning was issued against the 'left sectarian' mistake of neglecting them. But all the concrete measures adopted by the congress pointed in the opposite direction. Where organised RTUOs already existed, as in Germany, the slogan 'Enter the Reformist Trade Unions' should be struck out. It is true that the resolution warned against 'voluntary withdrawal' from the reformist unions. The central task, however, was to recruit members for the RTUOs. In other cases (in the Minority Movement, for example), the report explicitly referred to the need to go over to individual membership, which in effect turned the movement into a rival trade union. It spoke in one breath of Red Trade Unions and Trade Union Oppositions, thereby equating the two. There should be no panic or fear of founding new trade unions, it added.

Nevertheless, numerous remarks in discussion contributions and in resolutions made it plain that the impression being given of a tremendous expansion of the RILU did not correspond to reality. Again and again speakers referred to opportunist or sectarian errors, the dilatory implementation of the new line by some organisations, and so on.

The congress agenda included a separate item on 'The Role of the Trade Unions in the Socialist Construction of the Soviet Union', which served several purposes. The old 'opportunist' leadership around Tomsy was officially condemned by the RILU, one year after it had been removed from office in the VTsSPS. But the report also included a justification of the breakneck industrialisation carried out under the Five Year Plan, in which the trade unions, now purged of Tomsy's adherents, had the role of assisting the fulfilment of the plan to increase production at any cost while simultaneously reducing the income of the workers.

Nothing better expressed the reality of the RILU's condition than the reduction in the size of its leading bodies at a time when the overall membership was

Moscow, 1930. Extracts at least of the latter document also appear to have been distributed in German, in duplicated copies. But we were unable to find this publication, which is listed in Goldbeck 1987, p. 66.

supposed to have increased: the Central Council was reduced to 90 members, and the Executive Bureau elected by it to 27.⁵⁹

The congress ran smoothly. One reason for this was that the organised supporters of the opposition, who were still present in the CGTU at least, had been unable to send any delegates. Many speakers still engaged in polemical attacks on them, which were then included in the several of the resolutions. Even if they had come to the congress, however, they would no longer have received an opportunity to put forward their own position as a matter of course.⁶⁰

The case of Ravazzoli, an Italian who had been elected to the Central Council in 1928, shows the instruments that were used to control the congress. He had been one of the organisers of the CGL of the interior⁶¹ in 1927–8, but in the spring of 1930 he had come out in favour of the Trotskyist opposition, together with the former Executive Bureau member Tresso and other people. The communist party therefore removed him from the CGL. But he insisted on his right to participate in the congress, as an elected member of the Central Council, and the RILU was unable to reject this argument. It therefore made sure that, unlike all the other Italian representatives, he arrived in the USSR from his French place of exile too late to take part in any of the plenary sessions, where he would have been able to repeat Nin's performance at the fourth RILU congress.

59 As before, the membership of these bodies is only listed in the Russian version of the minutes. See *Pyatyi kongress Profintern 15–30 avgusta 1930. Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moscow, 1930, pp. 611–12 and 616. The seventh session of the Central Council was held directly after the end of the fifth congress, on 31 August. Apart from dealing with a number of lesser matters, its main job was to elect the Executive Bureau. (The documentation is preserved in RGASPI 534/2/61).

60 The newspaper of the French Trotskyists, *La Vérité*, reported that the CGTU leadership initially conceded that the opposition groups could receive appropriate representation in the delegation, in response to a request from the leadership of the Teachers' Union, the majority of which was made up of supporters of the *Opposition unitaire*. This concession was later withdrawn. (See the newspaper's correspondence on this subject and the commentaries on it in *La Vérité*, nos. 45, 18 July 1930 to 47, 1 August 1930, and the account in *Le syndicalisme dans l'enseignement*, vol. 3, n.d., pp. 120–3). Was it in Paris or in Moscow that they changed their minds?

61 When this was set up, at the beginning of 1927, it was initially not linked to either international, since the communists hoped to use it to mount a united front initiative towards the CGL in exile, which belonged to the IFTU, as we have already explained. When the new policy of RTUOS was introduced, the union's structure was altered. At the fifth RILU congress it was included in the RILU as its Italian section. On this point, see Pepe, Bianchi and Neglie 1999, pp. 307–12.

The only possibility left to him was to speak in one of the commissions. Several speakers responded by specifically stating their opposition to his point of view. These utterances were included in the published minutes, but Ravazzoli's own comments were not.⁶²

Apart from this, the fifth congress provided the Russians with the impulse finally to settle the problem of Nin's residence in Moscow, where he was still living as an exile. In the middle of August, almost exactly when the congress opened, he was put on a train for the West. It is an obvious conclusion that the aim was to deprive him of any contact with the delegates, particular those from Spanish-speaking countries. This appears from a declaration by the French and Chinese delegations, certainly not drawn up on their own initiative, in which Nin's deportation was welcomed. The Soviet proletariat, declared *Pravda* on 25 August, had already had to tolerate him for far too long.⁶³

The Central Council then also met for the last time, holding its eighth session from 7–17 December 1931.⁶⁴ After severe defeats had been suffered everywhere, and in particular in places where the attempt had been made to form new individual trade unions out of the RTUOs, what was now proposed was a modification of the RILU's tactics. It would be made much clearer than it had been previously that it was not permissible to abandon fractional work in the reformist trade unions. Nevertheless, this did not mean changing the movement's general orientation towards the 'independent revolutionary economic

62 On this, see the interview with him in *La Vérité*, no. 54, 19 September 1930, and his response to the PCI's attacks, in *La Vérité*, no. 58, 17 October 1930.

63 *La Vérité*, no. 53, 5 September 1930, reported on this story. It is interesting to note that the French and Chinese resolution was not included either in the German or the Russian minutes of the congress. At the beginning of 1934, a further prominent communist trade unionist was expelled as a Trotskyist: the Cuban Sandalio Junco, a member of the Central Council. (See Aleksander Kochański, 'El sindicalismo latinoamericano: Materiales del archivo moscovita de la Internacional Sindical Roja', *Estudios latinoamericanos*, no. 11, 1988, pp. 249–95, here p. 287). After spending a short time as the leader of the Cuban Trotskyists, Junco was then active in the nationalist movement (the 'Auténticos'). He was a prominent opponent of the communist party in the trade unions. In 1942, he was assassinated by an armed communist gang at a public meeting. (See his obituary, 'Stalinists Assassinate Negro Labour Leader', in *The New Leader*, 29 September 1942).

64 A shortened version of the minutes was published in *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, nos. 1/2, January 1932, to 5, first half of March. See also A. Losowsky, *Vorwärts zur Gegenoffensive des Proletariats. Referat und Schlußwort, gehl. auf der VIII. Session des Zentralrates der R.G.I. am 7., 8. und 17. Dezember 1931*, Berlin, 1932, and *Beschlüsse der 8. Session des Zentral-Rats der RGI, 7. bis 17. Dezember 1931*, Berlin, 1932. The documentation is in RGASPI 534/2/62–104.

struggle'. The RTUOs and the independent Red Trade Unions would still stand right at the centre of the RILU's activity. Every kind of 'united front from above' continued to be strictly ruled out. This meant that, despite all the Central Council's protestations, fractional work could be no more than a supplement to their main effort. Numerous deficiencies and setbacks had once again to be noted, but it was said that they resulted solely from an inadequate or even an erroneous application by the organisations of the correct line.

5 Organisational Inflation as a Compensation for Political Decline

The RILU had suffered repeated failures and a decline in influence since 1928, in spite of a number of spectacular strikes and a few partial successes. All the changes proclaimed at the meetings of those years were nothing but an attempt to compensate for this decline with purely organisational measures. The resolutions issued at these meetings from 1928 onwards had an impact which varied widely. Even so, every section of the RILU largely followed the instructions it had been given.⁶⁵

What was true of trade-union work in individual countries naturally had an identical effect on work in the international secretariats. The fourth RILU congress had already given vent to ambiguous formulae about the growing independence of the IPCs, and the need for them to go over to organisational work instead of limiting themselves to propaganda activities. This implied change of function was symbolised by making their official title longer, so that they became International Propaganda and Action Committees (IPACs). There

65 The most extensive study of this is Müller (1988), which examines the various stages passed through by the German RGO, which was the model for all the other 'trade union oppositions'. The first stage, between the spring of 1928 and the summer of 1929, was 'clarification', which meant the implementation of the new course against its 'right' and 'conciliationist' opponents. Then, between 1929 and 1930, came 'political preparation', involving the construction of the RGO by bringing together the existing trade-union fractions and separating them from the reformist trade unions. Thirdly there was 'organisational transformation', involving the founding of their own 'unified trade unions', which happened during the winter of 1930 to 1931. Finally, from then until 30 January 1933, there was the attempt to compensate for the failure of this policy by various tactical manoeuvres, such as the return to stressing fractional work in the reformist organisations. Developments in other countries ran roughly parallel to this. Only in Great Britain, as we have already pointed out, were these policies not carried out, although they were not questioned in principle.

was no more talk of exerting influence over the International Trade Secretariats. One consequence of this was that in the course of 1929 the newspapers and journals of the IPACs ceased to be published, since they had always been entirely directed to influencing the ITSS. Moreover, in June 1929 the Russian Food and Drink Workers' Union voluntarily withdrew from its International Trade Secretariat, the IUF, after provoking a political clash.⁶⁶

The IPACs themselves were kept in being, in order to co-ordinate the work of the Red Trade Unions internationally in each individual branch. Some of them also returned to publishing information sheets, though now they were produced much more simply; indeed they were often merely distributed in duplicated copies. Plans to move towards the foundation of 'red trade union internationals' were mooted early in 1930.⁶⁷ The initial idea was to establish nine internationals of this type. One of them was planned for the Land Workers. This was discussed by the appropriate IPAC at the beginning of 1930, as a leading participant in the discussion in Moscow wrote to Fritz Heckert. The original intention was to set up the new international in connection with the Fifth RILU Congress in the summer of 1930.⁶⁸ When the Fifth Congress met, however, the only reference to this was a form of words committing the RILU to transform the IPACs into 'organising and leading centres'. The resolution on organisation

66 In the mid-1920s, the two sides in the IUF had reached a kind of silent *modus vivendi* despite their fundamental differences of opinion. But from 1927 onwards, conflict came to a head in dramatic fashion. The IUF was first confronted with the 'recall' of the Russian representative Krol' from its executive. The explanation given was that he was now devoting his efforts to socialist construction in Siberia. In reality he had been deprived of his trade-union position for Trotskyism. His appointed successor, however, was replaced by yet a third person at the IUF congress the following year. After a number of journalistic skirmishes, the situation came to a head at a meeting of the executive in June 1929. The Russians issued an ultimatum, demanding that the IUF declare its solidarity with a strike by Bulgarian tobacco workers. But the tobacco industry was within the sphere of competence of another ITS, the International of Tobacco Workers, as the Soviet representatives knew full well. When the majority of the executive refused to discuss the matter, the Russians left the room, declaring that they were withdrawing from the IUF, since it had now finally exposed itself for what it was. (Krol' took part in the VTSPS congress at the end of 1928 as a member of the council elected in 1926, and he attempted to speak, but he was shouted down as a 'Menshevik-Trotskyist traitor'. He was then arrested and sent to a gulag. In 1937, he led a committee in the Kolyma region which organised a hunger strike by the Trotskyist inmates. All the participants were then shot. For more details, see Tosstorff 1998).

67 On this point, see Karpachev 1987, p. 135.

68 SAPMO 16/3/206/7-8.

passed at that congress was couched in vague and indefinite language, which reflected the fact that the whole project had been silently dropped: 'The more the political and organisational conditions indicated above become a reality, the more urgent does the practical question of the transformation of the largest IPACs into Trade Secretariats become; these will gradually extend their sphere of influence and win over to their side the trade union organisations of more and more new countries'.⁶⁹

Just one new red trade secretariat was established at this time: the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers (ISH), which combined the 'maritime influence' of the RILU and the Comintern. This influence had always been particularly important, and it already possessed an organisational scaffolding in the shape of the International Seamen's Clubs. The ISH could simply link up with these. In this case, therefore, what was involved was simply the reorganisation and renaming of an already existing apparatus. The formal establishment of a new secretariat was thus clearly an attempt to give the false impression of a qualitative step forward.⁷⁰

Apart from this, the RILU at its various meetings constantly had to call attention to the organisational weaknesses of the IPACs and their inability to exercise leadership, since they were not genuinely international. Fundamentally,

69 'Organisatorische Fragen der revolutionären Gewerkschaftsbewegung (Thesen zu den Berichten der Genossen Monmousseau und Niederkirchner)', *Protokoll des v.Kongresses* 1930, Teil 2, pp. 312–35, here p. 329. This only repeated the short comments made by Niederkirchner in his report, in which he also referred to the impending formation of the ISH (pp. 257–70, here p. 266). Lozovsky, too, touched on the theme briefly in his basic report ('Weltkrise, Wirtschaftskampf und Aufgaben der internationalen revolutionären Gewerkschaftsbewegung', *Protokoll des v.Kongresses* 1930, Teil 1, pp. 37–99, here p. 96). Apart from this, the subject was completely absent from the proceedings of the congress. There was not even a systematic discussion of the work of the IPACs, such as had been attempted at the fourth RILU congress in a special commission.

70 On the earlier maritime work of the RILU, see chapter 3, section 9, chapter 4, section 8, and chapter 5, section 4. On the foundation of the ISH in October 1930, and its first congress in May 1932, see Karpachev 1987, pp. 143–4 and *Einheitskongreß des Wassertransportproletariats der Welt. 20 Mai 1932 in Hamburg*, Hamburg, 1932. Until Hitler came to power, the headquarters of the ISH was Hamburg. Its president was the former *Schiffahrtsbund* official Walter. He was assisted from time to time by Hardy. See Hardy's memoirs (1956, pp. 212–35), which provide at most an impression of the atmosphere of those years in their polemics against the alleged Trotskyist factional activity of a number of ISH leaders. The role of the ISH as a secret communist network has been described in the memoirs of another former official, Richard Krebs, alias Jan Valtin, already mentioned above (Valtin 1988).

however, this was not a problem of inadequate organisation or incompetent leaders, although the documents often refer to a lack of suitable cadres. At the eighth session of the Central Council, the IPACs were given the shorter name of 'Intercoms' (International Committees). But they now lacked an appropriate field for their political activities, which had previously been provided by their concentration on work in the International Trade Secretariats. That was not all. Originally, they had been propped up by the individual Russian trade unions, which used them to seek membership in the ITSS. This backing had now disappeared. The International Committees now no longer had direct financial support from the Russian trade unions and they also lost many leading cadres, because with the fall of Tomsy these people had also fallen into disgrace as 'rightists'.⁷¹

It was the auxiliary organisations set up by the RILU in the colonial and semi-colonial countries which prospered particularly in the years after 1928. These were independent of the RILU in formal terms, but their membership overlapped with it, not to mention that their political objectives were identical. The first of these organisations to be established was the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. It originated out of an initiative taken not by the RILU but by the Australian trade unions. It was founded in May 1927, but it was immediately caught up in the maelstrom of the defeat of the Chinese revolution, which had become unavoidable after the left of the Guomindang broke with the communists in June. Its headquarters had to be moved from Wuhan to Shanghai, where it now operated in strict illegality. Its most important base of support, the Chinese trade unions, was under severe attack from the authorities at the same time. The decision of the Australian and Filipino trade unions to affiliate by no means made up for this. The secretariat was initially led by Earl Browder.⁷² Hardy was associated with him in the work from the end of 1927.⁷³

71 The Amsterdam organisations had now become 'Social Fascist traitors', and the international work of the VTSPS, which in any case had been much reduced since the abolition of its Committee for Foreign Relations in the summer of 1929, thereby gained a different focus. Its main international activities now consisted in conducting correspondence, in organising 'socialist competition' between Russian trade unions and individual sections of RTUOs, in inviting delegations of workers to the Soviet Union and in engaging in similar propaganda actions in the West. (See the inevitably uncritical remarks in Pankratov 1972, pp. 292–369).

72 There are some details on Browder's personal situation during his two years in Shanghai in Ryan (1997, pp. 31–4), but unfortunately no information on the actual content of his activities.

73 Hardy gives an account of his dangerous work in the secretariat, tending towards the anecdotal, in *Those Stormy Years* (Hardy 1956, pp. 195–221). Remarkably, he manages to

It was possible to hold a plenum of the secretariat in Shanghai in February 1928, despite the continuing repression. It claimed to represent 15 million trade unionists (including 9.5 million members under the VTsSPS, 2.8 million from the Chinese Trade Union Confederation, and one million from the Minority Movement). The objective of the struggle continued to be international trade-union unity, which the secretariat hoped to build up from the alliance with the Australians. The Australians offered to hold the next congress in their own country, and the plenum gratefully accepted this. It also agreed to transfer publication of the *Pan-Pacific Worker* to Sydney (though this journal continued to appear for some time in Shanghai under the 'neutral title' of *Far Eastern Monthly*).⁷⁴

These proceedings brought the Pan-Pacific Secretariat a degree of attention it had not yet received. The moderate Australian Workers' Union, the largest individual trade union in the country, began a strenuous campaign against it. This involved not just the question of communism, but was at least as much related to the 'White Australia' policy, to which the right wing of the Australian workers' movement was deeply committed. The secretariat was quite openly attacked as a back door allowing the country to be flooded by a cheap Asian labour force. But the Australasian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) at first stuck unwaveringly to its decision to join, sending a large delegation to Vladivostok to attend the next conference, in July 1929.⁷⁵ (The conference had been moved to Vladivostok, after other attempts to find a *venue* had failed, because of the Australian government's announcement that it would prohibit it. A second session of the conference, in which Hardy took a leading part, took place in Shanghai for Asian delegates who had found it impossible to make the trip to Vladivostok).⁷⁶

The conference was chaired by Lozovsky, and its proceedings were entirely dominated by the worsening conflict in Manchuria over the Chinese Eastern Railway, which was in Soviet ownership. As the conference interpreted it, this conflict was a further indication that the imperialists were about to wage war on the Soviet Union, which meant that the central task of the trade unions was to fight against this danger. The global intensification of the class struggle was

avoid saying a word about Earl Browder, who was in disgrace after 1945, although they must have worked side by side for many months.

74 There are copies of this preserved in SAPMO.

75 Farrell 1981, pp. 131-43. There had also been a separate meeting for delegates from the Pacific region in connection with the fourth RILU congress. The documentation on this meeting is in RGASPI 534/2/109.

76 Pankratov 1972, p. 285.

proclaimed. There were no more references to international unity. This was now replaced with the struggle against the IFTU, the 'international agency of imperialism'.⁷⁷

The Australian delegates arrived too late, after the conference had finished, but they were able to take part in a plenary meeting of the secretariat, where they were sharply attacked, particularly by Lozovsky. He reproached them for taking too conciliatory an attitude towards the 'White Australia' policy and he called upon them to engage in an open struggle against state arbitration legislation. An open confrontation with the Labour Party was implied in this proposal. After the delegates returned to Australia, fierce disagreement broke out over whether the ACTU should remain in the secretariat. At its congress, held in February 1930, further membership was rejected by a small majority (80 votes to 75). The ACTU did not itself belong to the RILU, but the trade unions of New South Wales, represented by the United Labor Council, had been members since 1922. The 'Trade Hall Reds', around Jock Garden, fought energetically though unsuccessfully to keep the ACTU in the Pan-Pacific Secretariat, although they had not belonged to the Australian Communist Party since the mid-1920s. They remained in the RILU until 1931, when the latter finally discovered that they embodied 'Left Social Fascism' and denounced them accordingly.⁷⁸

The Pan-Pacific Secretariat has left few traces of its activity after 1929. Browder had already returned to the USA at the beginning of that year, to begin his ascent to the top of the party (although he did take part in the Vladivostok conference). At the end of the year, Hardy returned to Europe (where he was soon given the task of leading the ISH). A branch office of the secretariat was established in San Francisco, with responsibility mainly for the Philippines and Japan. This was administered by Harrison George.⁷⁹ But work also continued in Shanghai, on a strictly illegal basis. A severe blow was inflicted by the Shanghai police in July 1931. The representative of the secretariat was arrested, and many documents and materials were confiscated at the same time.⁸⁰ The arrested

77 A. Lozovsky, *Itogi 11 tichookeanskoi konferentsii*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, and Pankratov 1972, pp. 284–8.

78 Farrell 1981, pp. 188–200. The United Labor Council was then replaced as the Australian section of the RILU by a 'Minority Movement' established on the British model.

79 On the connection between Harrison George, and the CPUSA in general, and the Pan-Pacific Secretariat, see the documents printed in *The Secret World of American Communism* 1995, pp. 42–70.

80 On these events, see Fritz Nicolaus Platten, "Ein Kampf um Leben und Tod". Die Affäre Rüegg', *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, no. 1, 1991, pp. 52–62, and Frederick S. Litten, 'The Noulens Affair', *China Quarterly*, no. 138, June 1994, pp. 492–510.

representative, who was a Soviet communist, as we now know, went under various pseudonyms. Under one of these, Paul Rüegg, he became the *cause célèbre* of an international solidarity campaign for a 'persecuted trade unionist'. The secretariat did continue to operate, however, because an emissary from the Comintern, who arrived in Shanghai the year afterwards, refers in his memoirs to an American who worked there as a representative of the RILU (by which he clearly meant the secretariat).⁸¹ This body, located in Shanghai, was part of a whole network of secret communist agencies. These gave political and military advice to the Chinese Communist Party, which had established Soviet areas in the south of the country, supported the activities of other communist parties in the Far East and, last but not least, conducted classic espionage operations. They were therefore responsible to various different Moscow institutions. Despite this uncertainty about the chain of command, Richard Sorge, who had been sent to Shanghai in 1931 by the secret service of the Red Army, was instructed in 1932 to organise the release of 'Rüegg' and his wife.⁸²

There was also an increased stress on Latin America after 1927. There was an initial discussion in November–December 1927 in Moscow, followed by a further meeting on the subject in April 1928, after the fourth RILU congress.⁸³ A committee for the establishment of a Latin American trade-union confederation was set up. The *Confederación Sindical Latinoamericano* (CSLA) originally planned to hold its founding conference at the end of 1928, but it did not take

81 Otto Braun, *Chinesische Aufzeichnungen (1932–1939)*, Berlin-GDR, 1973, p. 10.

82 The evidence for this rests on admissions made by Sorge himself after his arrest in Japan during the Second World War as well as on the Shanghai Municipal Police Files. Both sets of evidence were examined by the United States military administration of Japan after the war. The study by Willoughby (1952, pp. 95–6 and 122–3) is completely imbued with the spirit of the Cold War, and concentrates exclusively on the aspect of 'subversion', rather than depicting these activities as a whole, thus failing to grasp the reality of the communist movement. A somewhat more detailed study, which shows a clearer understanding of the differences between the various communist agencies, was produced by Deakin and Storry (1966, pp. 84–94). There is a large literature on Sorge, including the accounts of the Rüegg affair mentioned above, but it tends to get lost in the details of the world of secret communist agencies and underestimates the entirely independent function assigned to the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat, making it appear as if it was merely an instrument for disguising the 'real' activities of the agencies.

83 The documentation on this is in RGASPI 534/2/106–8. Portocarrero (1987, pp. 149–51) has given his impressions of the discussions. Lozovsky's speech and his final address to the meeting were published in Montevideo under the title 'El movimiento sindical latinoamericano', and have been reprinted since in Lourdes Quintanilla Obregón, *Lombardismo y sindicatos in América Latina*, Mexico, 1982, pp. 207–69.

place until May 1929, in Montevideo. Organisations from 15 countries were represented, though few of them were of any real significance.⁸⁴ The CSLA was in a close relationship with the RILU, and followed its political line, though it was not formally affiliated to it.⁸⁵ It established its headquarters in Montevideo. Its organ, *El trabajador latinoamericano*, was also published in that city. The marginal presence of the RILU in the Latin American trade-union movement was reduced even further by the proposal to split the trade unions, which was now put into effect. It is therefore no wonder that someone like Nin, who understood the situation very well, declared bluntly in 1933 that the CSLA was 'in reality nothing more than a bureaucratic fiction'.⁸⁶

The International Trade Union Committee for Negro Workers was set up for the black workers of America and Africa. The foundation for this was laid at the end of July 1928, at a meeting of the Executive Bureau with delegates to the Sixth Comintern Congress from the USA, France, South Africa and a number of other countries. The committee's activities were initially under the direction of the American communist James Ford. The RILU sections located in the European countries which held colonies were mainly called on for their support. An English-language paper entitled *The Negro Worker*, which was at

84 Incomplete minutes were later published, along with the resolutions passed by the conference: *Bajo la bandera de la C.S.L.A. Resoluciones y documentos varios del congreso constituyente de la Confederación Sindical Latinoamericana efectuado en Montevideo en mayo de 1929*, Montevideo, 1929. Jules Humbert-Droz helped to prepare for the conference and took part in it himself. See *Archives de Jules Humbert-Droz*, vol. 3, 1988, pp. xli–xliii, and 155–6. Pages 452–6 contain extracts from the theses passed by the conference. On the CSLA itself (and in general on the RILU's activities in Latin America), see Kochański 1988, pp. 171–91 and Ricardo Melgar Bao, *El movimiento obrero latinoamericano. Historia de una clase subalterna*, Madrid, 1988, pp. 258–70.

85 The discussion at the seventh session of the Central Council which was held after the fifth RILU congress on 31 August 1931 to elect the Executive Bureau was typical of this situation. First it was proposed to elect the Argentinian Miguel Contreras, who was at the same time the General Secretary of the CSLA, to the bureau. Then it was proposed to elect him under a pseudonym. The reasoning was that since the CSLA was formally independent of the RILU, the Anarchists, who were strong in Latin America, would have been presented with a further argument against it if Contreras were to be elected under his real name. Lozovsky's comment was: 'Formally this organisation does not belong to the RILU, although it is no secret to anyone that it is in a close family relationship with us' (RGASPI 534/2/61/7). Contreras was then elected under the pseudonym of Cordova (*Piatyi kongress Profintern* 1930, p. 616). Since he came from the Argentinian province of Córdoba, this cannot be described as a particularly conspiratorial move. See also his own short account of the CSLA: Miguel Contreras, *Memorias*, Buenos Aires, 1978, pp. 55–60.

86 Nin 1978, p. 131.

first simply produced by a duplicating machine, began to appear in Moscow in July 1928. A French edition (*L'ouvrier nègre*) was soon added. In 1929, an Organisation Committee was set up, with the task of preparing a representative conference, to meet in 1930. It was originally intended to hold this conference in London, but the British Labour government prohibited it, and so it took place in Hamburg from 7–9 July 1930. Hamburg was also the headquarters of the committee until 1933. One reason for this was that it was not possible to carry on open activities within the colonial powers themselves; another reason was that the committee could work closely together with the ISH in Hamburg, which was an extremely important requirement from the point of view of the illegal transport of both propaganda material and human beings.

The main activities of the committee were propagandist in nature. In addition it aimed to establish connections with the young trade-union movement in the colonial countries. Its most prominent personality was George Padmore, who originated from Trinidad. When the Nazis took power in Germany, the committee had to shift its activities elsewhere. The place of publication of *The Negro Worker* was moved first to Copenhagen, then to Brussels and finally to Paris.⁸⁷

87 The minutes of the Executive Bureau sitting in July 1928 are in RGASPI 534/3/206. For the conference of July 1930, see *A Report of Proceedings and Decisions of the First International Conference of Negro Workers. At Hamburg, Germany, July 1930*, Hamburg, 1930. Information about this committee can be found in the following publications: Rolf Itali-aander, *Schwarze Haut im roten Griff*, Düsseldorf-Vienna, 1962, pp. 53–73; Immanuel Geiss, *Panafrikanismus. Zur Geschichte der Dekolonisation*, Frankfurt, 1968, pp. 258–63; Edward T. Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa before World War II*, New York, 1974, pp. 175–253; M.Yu. Frenkel, 'Zhurnal "Negro Worker"', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 6, 1980, pp. 167–75; L.O. Golden, 'Mezhdunarodnyi profsoiuznyi komitet negritanskikh rabochikh', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 5, 1970, pp. 60–70; Ruth Deutschland, 'Die 1. Internationale Konferenz der Negerarbeiter vor 50 Jahren', *Asien. Afrika. Lateinamerika*, no. 4, 1980, pp. 703–12; and James R. Hooker, *Black Revolutionary. George Padmore's Path from Communism to Pan-Africanism*, New York, 1970, pp. 17–38. In the winter of 1933–4, Padmore broke with the Comintern as a result of the change that had begun to take place in the international policy of the Soviet Union, which was now aiming to secure an agreement with the colonial powers of the West. Later on he became one of the most important representatives of Pan-Africanism. Connections between the committee and the emerging African trade-union movement are examined in Leo Spitzer and LaRay Denzer, 'I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, no. 3, 1973, pp. 413–52. Contacts between the committee and emigrants from the colonies who were in France had a great impact on the development of both the anti-colonial movement and the organisation of black workers in trade unions. On this point, see J. Ayo Langley, 'Pan-Africanism in Paris, 1924–36', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, no. 1, 1969, pp. 69–94, and Phillipe Dewitte, *Les*

All these auxiliary organisations, whose emergence had been accompanied with such tremendous ballyhoo, soon lost all significance. Their claim to be a force for unity had already been abandoned by 1929, and the same was true to an even greater degree of the claim that they were independent of the RILU and the Comintern. They did, it is true, continue to exist until 1936 or at the latest 1937. After that, however, they ended their activities, unheralded and unsung, in parallel with the dissolution of the RILU.

There is no doubt that the most significant expression of the world economic crisis was the rise of mass unemployment. The fight against this, however, was not exclusively conducted by the RILU. The communist parties themselves sometimes organised movements of the unemployed directly, without going through the 'red trade unions'.⁸⁸ On 25 February 1931, an 'international day of the unemployed' was organised, and in August 1931 a conference of communist parties and revolutionary trade-union oppositions in Prague decided to organise the movement of the unemployed completely outside the framework provided by the RTUOS.⁸⁹

Mouvements nègres en France 1919–1939, Paris, 1985, pp. 187–216 and 277–320. A not uninteresting aspect of the history of this committee was the contribution its members made to the scientific investigation of the consequences of colonialism, which was closely connected with its propaganda activities. African studies in the Soviet Union grew out of this. See, for example, Padmore 1931, and A.T. Nzula, I.I. Potekhin and A.Z. Zusmanovich 1979 (this book was originally published in Moscow in 1933). The two Russian authors are covered in the following articles: 'Ivan Izosimovich Potekhin', *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 6, 1964, pp. 171–5; A.B. Davidson, 'I.I. Potekhin i sovetskaia afrikanistika', *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 4, 1974, pp. 73–87; and 'Aleksandr Zakharovich Zusmanovich', *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 6, 1965, pp. 243–5. See also Wilson 1974, pp. 189–90, and the introduction by Robin Cohen to the above-mentioned book first published in 1933, which also contains information on Nzula, a prominent black South African communist, who died in Moscow at the beginning of 1934, after living there since 1931. A number of rumours swirled around at the time, connecting his death with political differences.

- 88 The RILU's programme on unemployment is presented in its Theses on Organisation adopted at the fifth congress. See *Protokoll des v. Kongresses der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale* 1930, vol. 2, pp. 312–35, here pp. 325–6. For a general discussion of this complex of questions, see Richard Croucher, 'Communist Unemployed Organisations Between the World Wars. International Patterns and Problems', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, vol. 30, 1990, pp. 584–97.
- 89 See Müller 1988, pp. 223–4. See also Lidia Schewtschenko, 'Die Internationalen Kampftage gegen die Erwerbslosigkeit 1930 und 1931', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 3, 1988, pp. 361–71, and, by the same author, 'Erfahrungen der KI und der RGI im Kampf um die Arbeitsbeschaffung Anfang der dreißiger Jahre', no. 2, 1989, pp. 173–84.

The events of 30 January 1933 marked the failure of the whole line taken by the communist movement in the country regarded as precisely the place where it would be most effective. The communists were unable to prevent Hitler from coming to power, destroying the German workers' movement and thereby decisively weakening the left internationally. Indeed, it might even be said that they had assisted in this process, though without wishing to do so. For the KPD and the Comintern, however, this was no reason to rethink their policies. At the beginning of March, a united front offer was made to international social democracy, surprisingly, but it was withdrawn a few days later. After a report delivered by Heckert on 1 April 1933, the Comintern proclaimed that the line it had taken until then had been completely correct.⁹⁰

It logically followed from this approach that on 1 May 1933 the RILU came up with a manifesto which ended with the slogan: 'Down with Fascism and its reformist accomplices!'⁹¹ The manifesto attacked the inglorious role of the ADGB in the first months of Hitler's rule, when it had pursued a strategy of accommodation in the vague hope that it would not be made illegal. This had led to a severe conflict within the IFTU, which had had its headquarters in Berlin since 1931, but which now had to be moved to Paris, where the CGT became its dominant force. The RILU immediately drew from this the conclusion that the Amsterdam international was about to collapse.⁹²

The RILU itself, of course, was now compelled to move its Berlin centre, its most important stronghold outside Russia, as well as the MEB and the publishing house. For a short period of time it was possible to publish the German-language edition of its press organ, *Die Rote Gewerkschafts-Internationale*, in Copenhagen. But the German-speaking clientele for the RILU's publications had now shrunk considerably, with the result that it was soon wound up. The only German-language periodical was now the press report (*Internationale Gewerkschafts-Pressekorrespondenz*, or *Ingewpress*). This continued to come out.⁹³ Paris would now become the chief headquarters of the RILU in Western Europe. This was not only because the city on the Seine rapidly became an

90 See Broué 1997, pp. 549–50.

91 Quoted in Karpachev 1987, p. 147.

92 See a RILU pamphlet published in April 1933 or thereabouts with the title *Leiparts Weg zu Hitler. Der Weg der Amsterdamer Gewerkschafts-Internationale*. Lozovsky seems to have been the main advocate of the view that Amsterdam was now 'finished'. See the reference to a reply by Lozovsky on this subject at the Executive Bureau sitting of October 1931 in Karpachev 1987, p. 155.

93 This information is based on the issues preserved in the exile archive of the German National Library.

important centre for the German exile community, but also because the course of political events put France at the forefront of Soviet preoccupations, and thus made the CGTU the most important trade union.

It was not possible, however, to avoid drawing any conclusions at all from the failure in Germany. In the first place, fundamental organisational changes were now required. Since 1929, the apparatus of the RILU had increased considerably, in line with the rise in the number of sections it had all over the world. The loss of Germany, certainly combined with financial considerations, now compelled a reduction in staff. A number of departments at the centre were either abolished completely or reduced in size. The IPACs were particularly affected by this, as even less importance was evidently attached to them now. The plan of reorganisation drawn up by the Executive Bureau in October 1933 prescribed a 50 percent reduction of the RILU's apparatus, from 300 to 150 staff members.⁹⁴

But there were also corrections to be made to the RILU's policies. The correctness 'in principle' of the political line was not questioned, but it was possible to make tactical improvements by bringing to an end the crudest of its sectarian exaggerations. It was repeatedly stressed in internal meetings that work in the reformist trade unions had been inadequate. The 13th ECCI Plenum, which met from 28 November to 12 December 1933, was quickly followed by an enlarged sitting of the Executive Bureau, from 14–16 December. This meeting noted yet again that the communist trade unionists had proved unable to break out of their isolation. The 'red trade unions' had succeeded in increasing their numbers, but the rise in the membership of the reformist trade unions was much greater. They should therefore make a greater effort to form fractions within them. They should also attempt to win 'mass influence' in Germany by taking up illegal work within the Labour Front set up by the National Socialists. It was proposed to hold a ninth session of the Central Council to go into these questions more deeply.⁹⁵ Preparations were actually made for this, as is shown by the collection of materials in the RILU archive.⁹⁶ The meeting never took place, however, because of the fundamental turn in communist policy, towards trade-union unity, which occurred in the summer of 1934.⁹⁷ (Instead of a meeting of

94 It is reproduced in full by Karpachev (1987, pp. 156–8).

95 See Karpachev 1987, pp. 159–61, on the 13th ECCI Plenum, and Karpachev 1987, pp. 161–8 on the enlarged sitting of the Executive Bureau.

96 RGASPI 534/3/969.

97 The preparations for the ninth session of the Central Council were part and parcel of the consistent continuation of the 'ultra-left' course. This is shown by the discussion at a meeting of the KPD Polibureau in exile in Paris on 5 April 1934. There was a thorough

the Central Council, there was an international meeting of trade unions, which coincided with the Seventh Comintern Congress in 1935. See chapter 9, section 2).

Ultimately, these activities were nothing but attempts by purely organisational means to evade the need for a change in the political direction of the RILU. After all, it had gained a stronger position since 1929 owing to the 'ultra-left' turn, because a great deal of stress had been placed on the formation of independent organisations. As a result, Lozovsky's own position was now stronger, and he had also gained a more prominent role in the Comintern. Another reason for this was that the VTsSPS had lost its independent influence after 1929 following the removal of Tomskey. The ultra-left policy had now failed, however, even if nobody was yet ready to concede the fact. What remained open was the question of the political level at which the initiative would have to be taken to overcome this situation. There was no doubt, though, that the importance of the RILU had declined rapidly, and was continuing to do so. There was therefore now a serious question mark over Lozovsky's position in the international communist movement.

debate there on the future formation of a hard core of revolutionary class-based trade unions which would emerge from the RGO (SAPMO I 2/3/13/57–8).

The End of the Road: The RILU from 1934–7

1 Trade-Union Unity under the Banner of the Turn to the Popular Front

The year 1934 introduced the change towards the Popular Front policy. It was only in retrospect, however, that this appeared to lead logically and uninterruptedly to the dissolution of the RILU in 1937. The Communist International's change of line was aimed at assisting Soviet foreign policy in its effort to deal with the threat posed by Hitler's Germany by working for an international alliance, not just with the workers' parties, but over and above this with bourgeois forces as well. France lay at the fulcrum of these developments. From the foreign policy angle, the Soviet Union moved in 1934–5 towards concluding a pact with France, and from the political angle there was a successful anti-Fascist mass mobilisation in February 1934 which repelled the advance of right-wing forces there, and which led in July to a socialist-communist alliance. In the autumn of that year, the alliance was broadened to include the Radical Party (classified as a party of bourgeois liberals) and given the name of 'Popular Front'. The initiative for this came from the communists. The Popular Front approach was then proclaimed to be the model that had to be followed elsewhere, and that is how the new policy gained its name.¹

The new line meant a radical reversal of the course the Comintern had steered since 1928, and an abandonment of the 'Social Fascism' and RTUO policies, policies that had involved a refusal to co-operate with social-democratic mass parties or to work in the existing trade unions. The change was therefore the subject of fierce debate at first in the Moscow offices of the Comintern and the RILU, and there were not a few people who tried to apply the brakes. Lozovsky was not one of the people who openly resisted the new course – the main objector was Béla Kun – but he was certainly interested in defending the existence of the RILU, which was now in danger. The 'revolutionary trade union course' pursued after 1928 had appeared to give it a new mass basis, and to confirm its right to exist, which had been undermined in the mid-

1 It is impossible here either to give detailed references to the background and significance of the new Soviet policy or to examine developments in France. The latest research results on the Comintern's change of line are summarised in Broué 1997, pp. 649–58.

1920s by the 'course to the right' taken by the Russian trade unions. Lozovsky recognised, however, that the movement towards unity had now acquired such dynamism that it was no longer possible to oppose it.

As early as the summer of 1934, the RILU leadership called for a change in policy. It abandoned important aspects of the RTUO line, and proclaimed the need for trade-union unification. The RTUOs, it said, had only managed to organise the unorganised, and their work had failed to resonate with the masses who remained in the reformist unions. One must be ready to make certain concessions, it was now said.² What was most important, though, was to avoid giving the impression that a fundamental mistake had been made in 1928, because this would have provided *ex post facto* justification for the critics who had been expelled from the party. Heckert accordingly argued, with typical Stalinist chicanery, that the fourth and fifth RILU congresses had adopted the correct line. That line continued to be valid. But many errors of implementation had been made, and in any case certain individual aspects of the situation had changed.³ He deliberately suppressed the fact that changes in the line in 1928 and 1930 had been announced as a realisation of fundamental principles, and as a result any opposition to this had been regarded as inevitably implying fundamental hostility to the communist movement.

At best, a few words were uttered later on, which gave the impression of a certain degree of self-criticism in relation to the previous six years, although this can only be described as half-hearted. What the communist agencies were most interested in, despite their pretence that they were making a fundamental change in their approach, in the interests of the whole trade-union movement, was to avoid sinking still more deeply into isolation. The goal of their efforts was to use the trend towards unifying the trade unions as an instrument to achieve the objectives of the Popular Front policy.

Starting with the summer of 1934, there were numerous mergers of communist and social-democratic trade-union confederations, or, where the relation of forces was too one-sided for this, communist trade unions were simply liquidated and their members were asked to join social-democratic unions, though in the movement's propaganda this was given out as 'unification'. This process accelerated in 1935. Developments in France led the way, although trade-union unification limped along some way behind political reconciliation.⁴ The united front agreement between the socialists and the communists was concluded at

² See, for example, O. Pjatnitzki n.d.

³ Fritz Heckert, 'Grundprobleme der internationalen Gewerkschaftsbewegung' (SAPMO NY 4007/17/178–90).

⁴ For the following paragraph, see Dreyfus 1995, pp. 154–62 and Georges 1979, pp. 127–51.

the end of July 1934. Negotiations between the CGT and the CGTU, however, did not begin until October, and they immediately stuck fast on two sensitive issues: the traditional independence of the trade unions from political parties (that is to say, the rule against a person's simultaneously occupying a leading position in a trade union and a party – known in French as the '*cumul*') and the prohibition of fractional activity. It seemed for some months as if failure was on the cards, until in June 1935 the communists signalled that they were ready to give way. This was also an echo of the Franco-Soviet diplomatic *rapprochement*, which resulted in May 1935 in the Stalin-Laval Pact. The question of the rival internationals was of course another vexed problem. But the two issues we have mentioned were far more important for the communists, since they directly affected their position in a unified trade-union organisation, with the result that the international question tended to be left in the background.

Events now began to move quickly, accelerated by the fact that mergers had already taken place on a local and factory basis, resulting in the creation of 'single trade unions' ('*Syndicats uniques*'). Top-level discussions were taken up again at the end of June, and by the end of July it was possible to sign a joint declaration that the two confederations intended to amalgamate. They each held a congress in September to sanction the merger officially. In January 1936, a joint leadership was set up and the CGT and the CGTU completed the process of unification at a congress held in Toulouse between 2–5 March 1936. The continued use of the old name, CGT, by the reunified organisation indicated that in essence it was the communists who had re-entered the old union. The way the disputed questions were decided also made it clear that the leaders of the old CGT now had the upper hand. The holding of political office was prohibited, whether in a parliamentary assembly or a political party. After the new communist officials of the CGT had been elected, they therefore announced their withdrawal from party offices, such as membership in the PCF politbureau. The PCF had already agreed not to form 'fractions' in the unions, but *La Vie ouvrière* continued to exist as the public face of the communists in the CGT (in October 1936, to counter this, the reformists started to bring out a rival organ, under the title *Syndicats*). The new CGT confirmed its membership of the IFTU, as a result of which the communists gained a significant presence in that body, for the first time ever. They had also failed to achieve any changes in the structure of the confederation, which one-sidedly favoured the smaller, and more reformist, trade unions. Moreover, the leaders of the old CGT did not have to give the communists any concessions in return.

All these points had already become clearly apparent in the months that preceded the merger, however. Communist decision-making on the matter, and in particular the communist decision to accept the demands of the CGT, had

in any case taken place in full consultation with the RILU, both at sittings of the Executive Bureau and in the more broad-based trade-union discussion in the summer of 1935, and with its full agreement. The PCF and the RILU also shared the secret intention to evade any CGT resolutions relating to communist behaviour.⁵ (On this point, see below in more detail).

The communists did not carry enough weight in other countries to be able to conduct public negotiations for a merger, culminating in a congress of unification. But the fundamental direction of policy, which combined far-reaching concessions in public with an attempt to gain leading positions in the united organisation, was the same everywhere. In Spain, the disproportion between the communist trade unions and the socialist UGT, which had passed through an extensive process of radicalisation under its leader Largo Caballero since 1933, was very great. The communists claimed that almost 50,000 members were affiliated to their national centre, while the UGT was at least fifteen times as big, and probably even larger than that in reality. The UGT accordingly rejected any form of merger, but it said it was ready to accept the communists into its ranks. The communist trade unions were thus forced to dissolve themselves. There were local negotiations about the entry of individual groups into the UGT, which were concluded in the first months of 1936. In their international propaganda, the communists were happy to speak of the *establishment of unity* in Spain, creating the misleading impression that there had been an amalgamation similar to that in France. It was clear from the outset, however, that in Spain the question of which international to belong to could not even be posed.⁶

In the USA, it was out of the question even to achieve what had been possible in Spain. Admittedly, the Trade Union Unity League (TUUL) had been able to contemplate the pleasant prospect of a big rise in strikes and in working-class organisation since 1933. For the first time, thanks to the new labour legislation introduced by the Roosevelt administration, trade-union activities had been able to gain a foothold in the industries of mass production. In 1934, the country was shaken by three big local strikes, in San Francisco, Minneapolis and Toledo, which compelled the employers to recognise trade unions. But the TUUL had little to do with this. Only in the Bay area was the movement led by communists. And they only succeeded there because they had previously

5 For example, the communist trade unionists who had withdrawn from the PCF Politbureau continued to participate in its meetings. See the evidence from the Moscow archives utilised by Stéphane Courtois in 'Dirigeants communistes et mouvement syndical', *Communisme*, no. 35–7, 1993–4, pp. 4–18, and Jean-Louis Panné in 'Le P.C.F., l'unité et la question syndicale', *Communisme*, no. 35–7, 1993–4, pp. 19–30.

6 Cruz 1987, pp. 240–3.

begun to gain influence in the local AFL. The TUUL was bypassed by the rise of the American trade-union movement. The organisations that profited were other independent trade unions, or indeed the AFL, in which a fierce struggle for the creation of industrial trade unions now began. John L. Lewis, the miners' leader, who had been the strongest opponent of the communists in the 1920s, started to advocate this new form of organisation. At the end of 1935, he established the Committee of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which was expelled from the AFL and went on to set up a new national trade-union centre.⁷ He asked for support from the communists, which they gave, after some initial hesitation.

In the spring of 1935, the TUUL gradually started to wind up its activities, and those of its member organisations. Only in two cases, those of the metal-workers and furriers, did it succeed in negotiating an organised transfer to the appropriate AFL trade union. In all other cases, TUUL members had to join as individuals, and most of the time communist trade-union members did not disclose their party affiliation. Nevertheless, they very quickly succeeded in gaining a considerable influence in the later CIO trade unions (particularly among the automobile workers and those employed in the electrical industry). The communists' entry into AFL unions at first had no international consequences, since the AFL had not belonged to the IFTU since 1920 (it would rejoin in 1937).⁸

A situation of a special character arose in Austria. After the workers' rising of 12 February 1934 had been suppressed, the Austro-Fascist dictatorship became firmly entrenched. The whole working-class movement was now illegal. Some days after the events of 12 February 1934, a group of trade-union leaders met together to establish a Commission of Seven, in the hope that this would be able to bargain with the Dollfuss government to secure a kind of toleration. This approach was reminiscent of the line taken in Italy in the 1920s by the CGL leadership around D'Aragona. As in Italy, the prospect turned out, after a few days, to be illusory. The regime set up corporatist organisations, based on the Christian workers' movement, which were also described as 'unified trade unions'. The Commission of Seven reacted to this by setting up a Central Committee of Free Trade Unions, and set to work to create an illegal organisation.

At the same time as the Commission of Seven was being set up, there was a meeting of factory trade-union officials, which also decided to establish illegal trade-union groups, partly at the urging of the communists. A so-called Central

7 The new centre called itself the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which was also abbreviated to CIO. Its first congress was held in 1938.

8 See Klehr (1984, pp. 118–34 and 223–51), Johanningsmeier (1994, pp. 273–6) and Cochran (1977, pp. 74–7).

Reconstruction Commission was formed. The communist party put forward the slogan of 'red trade unions' for a short while, but this was quickly dropped. What ultimately had priority for the communists was the need to co-operate with the left wing of Social Democracy, many of whose members flocked to join them during the next few months. For the first time in its history, the communist party gained mass influence in Austria. This was facilitated by the replacement of the 'Social Fascist' policy with the 'Popular Front' slogan.

Two rival trade-union leaderships now confronted each other: the Commission of Seven, which was oriented towards Social Democracy, although its relationship with the two Social Democratic headquarters in Brno and Vienna was marked by a considerable conflict, and the Central Reconstruction Commission, which was run by left social democrats and communists. The Commission of Seven of course possessed great advantages. It had the confidence of the IFTU and also received much material support from that body. The Central Reconstruction Commission responded very quickly by steering a course towards reunification. The IFTU was also keen on this, and it exercised 'gentle pressure' on the Commission of Seven to show a spirit of reconciliation. As a result, the two organisations merged in July 1935, so that there was now a unified, illegal, free trade-union movement in Austria. The communist trade unionists had played their hand well. The emergency situation of illegality and the joint anti-Fascist struggle made a great contribution to their success. Their presence in the leadership of the illegal trade unions was of limited importance to the IFTU as this related to an illegal organisation which did not possess the full rights of an IFTU section. Its symbolic significance, however, was clear.⁹

In Mexico, the constellation of forces was different again. Since 1933 there had been a general expansion in the trade-union movement, which was given further impetus in 1934 by the election of Lázaro Cárdenas as president. He extended workers' rights, redistributed land and nationalised the oil industry. These were all parts of an endeavour to put into effect the programme of the Mexican revolution. With these measures, Cárdenas created an active mass base for the post-revolutionary regime. The communist union, the CSUM, could again operate legally. The CROM, in contrast, had passed through a rapid process of disintegration since 1929. There had been several splits. Particularly important was the split organised by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, who had been the CROM's leader for many years. At the end of 1933, he founded the

9 See Franz West, *Die Linke im Ständestaat Österreich. Revolutionäre Sozialisten und Kommunisten 1934–1938*, Vienna, 1978, pp. 33–41, and Josef Hindels, *Österreichs Gewerkschaften im Widerstand 1934–1945*, Vienna, 1986, pp. 42–78.

Confederación General de Obreros y Campesinos Mexicanos (CGOCM). Toledano proclaimed that he was a Marxist and an admirer of the Soviet Union. He travelled to the USSR in the summer of 1935, at the time of the Seventh Comintern Congress, and engaged in negotiations with the Mexican communists there. His objective was to unite the Mexican trade unions under his leadership. He had a contradictory position. On the one hand, he supported an unambiguously pro-Soviet course in international questions, speaking out in favour of the Popular Front and collective security. On the other hand, however, he was happy to regard the Mexican trade unions as a part of the government *bloc* led by President Cárdenas. It was therefore not without misgivings that the CSUM took part in the unity negotiations. It was pressed by Moscow to do this, even though a strongly anti-communist tendency had emerged in the CGOCM, which warned Toledano not to get too close to the communists. The negotiations were propelled forward by a powerful movement of political and social mobilisation, sparked off by the reactionary manoeuvres of former president Calles and his preparations for a *putsch*.¹⁰ By February 1936, the amalgamation of the trade unions had already been achieved, under the name of the *Confederación de Trabajadores de México* (CTM). The unification congress was marred by vehement clashes between communists and anti-communists. The latter finally succeeded in forcing the resignation of the Organisation Secretary, the second in command of the CTM after its president Lombardo Toledano, a communist who had just been elected to the post at the congress. The communists had to make do with the office of National Education Secretary, although they represented a sizeable section of the membership. They were even less able to exert their influence later on, because Lombardo Toledano bound the CTM directly to the State Party, which he described as the expression of the Mexican Popular Front. The CTM joined the IFTU in July 1936 at the latter's London congress. Moreover, in 1937 the Comintern enforced its discipline on the communists in the CTM, when a renewed conflict broke out with the right wing of the union, and it appeared that there was a danger of a split. The Comintern reacted to this danger by issuing the slogan 'Unity at any price'.¹¹ In any case, the confederation did subsequently prove to be a close ally for the Soviet Union's international trade-union policy.

There were amalgamations of a similar kind in many other countries at this time, and all of them, taking national conditions into account, were compar-

10 Calles was finally sent into exile in the USA in April 1936, accompanied by Morones, among others. With this, the CROM finally ceased to be a factor in the situation.

11 See Samuel León and Ignacio Marván, *La clase obrera en la historia de México*, vol. 10, *En el cárdenismo*, Mexico, 1985, and Tobler 1984, pp. 588–616.

able with one or other of the cases presented above. These developments had at most an indirect effect at the international level, in other words the level of the relationship between the IFTU and the RILU. Any move towards international unification would have to come from initiatives taken by one or the other. The question of 'Amsterdam and Moscow' surfaced once again, for the first time since 1926, as the IFTU secretariat wrote in a survey of its activities published in 1937.¹² The Norwegian trade-union confederation tried to mediate, as it had done years before. It was still internationally independent, although currents which supported entering the IFTU were now stronger within it. When it held a congress at the end of November 1934, it received a letter from the RILU, greeting it and asking it to contribute to bringing about trade-union unity. It replied by adopting an international appeal, sent to all parties, including both the RILU and the VTSPS. It said it was ready to mediate internationally, it would support any initiative that would serve that purpose, and it also informed everyone that in the course of 1935 it would hold a referendum of its members on its future international orientation. In its reply, the RILU referred to the events in France. 'Parallel trade unions' were being unified there, it said. This route should also be followed in other countries. If this happened, the internationals would also be unified. This was not the answer the Norwegians wanted. In their reply, on 12 February, they went to the heart of the problem: 'Is the Red International of Labour Unions, in agreement with the Russian national trade union organisation, prepared to approach the International Federation of Trade Unions for negotiations over unification, without setting any preconditions?' The Norwegians themselves answered the question in their own way: a referendum was held in which 90 percent of those who voted supported re-entry into the IFTU. Only 20 percent of the members had participated in the referendum, however.¹³

The IFTU had already taken a position on the question of unity before Moscow either could comment or wished to do so. At an Executive Committee meeting in Weymouth in August 1934, the IFTU took cognisance of a report by Jouhaux on the way the united front discussions had been going in France. The communists' offers were mere manoeuvres, he said. The IFTU was the only

12 *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1933–1935*, Paris, 1937, p. 72. (This was the report delivered by the secretariat on its activities to the IFTU congress of July 1936 in London).

13 But the IFTU had also sent a signal in advance of the vote, underlining at a meeting of its Executive Committee at the end of May 1935 that it was ready in principle to establish unity by accepting into its ranks national centres which currently stood apart (*Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1933–1935*, Paris, 1937, pp. 78–9 and 179–82). See also Lorenz 1991, pp. 287–8.

genuine basis for unity. They would therefore wait for the communist trade unions to dissolve themselves, which would also bring an end to the RILU.¹⁴

A further few months were to elapse before the RILU opened its correspondence with the IFTU. On 7 March 1935, it proposed a meeting to discuss joint actions on the First of May, joint endeavours to establish trade-union unity in France and Spain, the reconstruction of the 'free trade unions' in Germany, and in addition to this the restoration of trade-union unity at the international level. The IFTU replied on 2 April rejecting the proposal, and pointing not only to the Weymouth decision of its Executive Committee but also to the position taken by the Norwegian trade unions, which had recognised that there was only room for one national trade-union centre in each country, and that this applied internationally as well. In its long rejoinder of 17 April, the RILU rejected the IFTU's ultimatum. It did not want simply to liquidate the revolutionary trade unions, but to amalgamate them with the others on an equal basis. The furious tone of the RILU's reply did not alter the fact that the IFTU had simply been stating its traditional attitude. The IFTU did not reply directly to the letter of 17 April, but when its Executive Committee met in Copenhagen at the end of May, it used language somewhat more moderate at least in form than it had in Weymouth (which was also meant as a further signal to the Norwegian trade unions). The IFTU, it said, was ready to engage in any discussion which might lead to the restoration of trade-union unity, provided this was conducted in a spirit of honesty and loyalty.

A new round in this fencing match started in September, during the CGT congress, when the European Secretariat of the RILU (which was essentially the same as the CGTU leadership) handed Jouhaux a letter, which was an important milestone in the move towards French trade-union unification. In this, the CGT leadership was invited to discuss steps towards international unity with the RILU. Jouhaux replied that this was not within his field of competence. The decision had first to be made by the IFTU, so he sent the letter on to them. Lozovsky initially associated himself with this letter by sending a telegram to the IFTU, but he later changed his mind.

The IFTU now seized the initiative. At a sitting of the Executive Committee on 11 October, it noted the arrival of the European Secretariat's letter and its circuitous journey, but it did not feel it was obliged to take a position on it. It discussed instead the worsening of the international situation which resulted from Italian action in Ethiopia and confirmed a call for an international

14 *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1933–1935*, Paris, 1937, pp. 79 and 191.

boycott, already agreed with the LSI, to strengthen the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations. (The background to this discussion was the Comintern's call for international 'class struggle actions' against the war). After another discussion with the LSI, the IFTU decided to make separate approaches to all the national trade-union centres which did not belong to it, with the request that they support its approach to the Ethiopian conflict. In line with this decision, the IFTU sent a letter to the VTsSPS on 18 October. The latter replied negatively on 5 November. It was impossible to rely on the League of Nations to secure peace, said the VTsSPS. The working class must act independently. It referred to the RILU's letter of 7 March and demanded a joint meeting of the internationals, which should be held without delay. The RILU sent its own letter to the IFTU in support of this position. But the IFTU only replied to the Russian trade unions. It regretted their rejection of sanctions, adding that an international conference could serve no useful purpose.¹⁵ The main stumbling block, no doubt, was the attempt of the Russian trade unions to bring the RILU into the picture.

The situation was thus essentially the same as it had been in 1924. The RILU wanted a negotiation on international unity between two equals, but the IFTU was at best interested in gaining the affiliation of the Russians (along with the inclusion of the communist minority organisations in other countries in the local IFTU unions). It was also easy for the IFTU to point out numerous internal contradictions in the new communist unity offensive, particularly by quoting statements made at the Seventh Comintern Congress. In looking back on the history of the many changes in communist trade-union policy over the years, the IFTU was not inclined to abandon its conviction that the new unity manoeuvre was just another example of communist double-dealing.¹⁶

15 *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1933–1935*, Paris, 1937, pp. 72–80, 175–9 and 182–91; *Briefwechsel zwischen der Roten Gewerkschafts-Internationale und dem Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbund über die Herstellung der Aktionseinheit und der internationalen Gewerkschaftseinheit*, n.p., n.d.; and *Für Einheitsfront im Kampfe gegen den Krieg. Briefwechsel zwischen den Gewerkschaften der Sowjet-Union, der RGI und dem IGB*, n.p., n.d. See also A. Lozovsky, *Za edinyi front i edinstvo profdvizheniia*, Moscow, 1935, which is a collection of his articles on the correspondence with the IFTU.

16 See the detailed discussion of communist trade-union policy in *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1933–1935*, Paris, 1937, pp. 80–4. The invitation sent by the Russian trade unions to Citrine, which he accepted, visiting Russia in September and October 1935, ten years after his first visit, was probably one of the communists' manoeuvres (see Citrine 1964, pp. 122–8). On his part, the visit was intended exclusively to gather information on the situation there, and not to take part in any kind of unity

2 The Seventh Comintern Congress and the International Trade Union Discussion

The RILU now faded increasingly into the background, even in the context of this process of achieving international unity. The communist parties were in the driving seat. When an international trade-union discussion took place in Moscow in the summer of 1935, no statutory leading body of the RILU was summoned to take part in this. The delegates at the meeting were taken directly from the Comintern. The Seventh Comintern Congress met in July and August 1935 in order to confirm the Popular Front policy.¹⁷ Dimitrov gave the main report, on 'The Offensive of Fascism and the Tasks of the Communist International in the Struggle for the Unity of the Working Class against Fascism'. In the course of this, he also touched on the theme of trade-union unity, and explicitly called for the dissolution of the red trade unions and their amalgamation with the others in the national and the international spheres, 'on the basis of the class struggle and trade-union democracy', as the congress resolution put it in so many words.¹⁸ Lozovsky then took the floor with a contribution in which he gave a detailed account of the status of the unity negotiations. Negotiations between the RILU and the IFTU had reached a dead end, he said, but he went into the French situation at length. In view of the great increase in local union mergers, it was now more than ever necessary to engage in the planned fractional work in the reformist trade unions. Another problem

negotiation. He therefore felt that the Russian trade unions had cheated him when he was confronted by Lozovsky at a final reception (Citrine 1964, pp. 127–8). He turned the numerous observations he had made during the journey into a book, which contained an acute assessment of the social situation in the country, particularly among the workers and the trade unions: Walter Citrine, *I Search for Truth in Russia*, London, 1936. It is interesting that he does not mention his meeting with Lozovsky in this book. In his later memoirs, he added that after he had left the reception under protest, he no longer felt entirely safe, so the British ambassador provided him with an escort from the embassy during his journey back to the Soviet border. He might not have mentioned the meeting in his book because it was not yet possible to predict the precise result of the negotiations that had begun in the meantime with the Russian trade unions over their entry into the IFTU. He also describes the great efforts he made to meet Tomsy, who had been dismissed from office in 1929 and transferred to the post of publishing director. The authorities initially used various transparent excuses to prevent him from doing so, but he finally succeeded. All that came out of the meeting, however, was a general exchange of views, in the presence of an official interpreter (Citrine 1936, pp. 83–4 and 131–5).

17 See Broué 1997, pp. 660–6.

18 VII. Weltkongreß Resolutionen und Bechlüsse, pp. 24–5.

was work in the Fascist trade unions. This was only of marginal significance from the point of view of unification as in this case they were dealing with countries in which the IFTU organisations had been banned.¹⁹

There was no special resolution on trade-union questions at this congress, however, because, as we have mentioned, a separate conference was held on 22–23 August, to which the Comintern delegates with a trade-union background were summoned. This was the forum for a detailed discussion of the situation in each individual country. It was held instead of a ninth session of the RILU's Central Council, which the Executive Bureau at its December 1933 meeting had proposed to hold at some point in the future (see chapter 8, section 5), but which was no longer a practical proposition because of the discussions on trade-union unification in many countries. A public meeting of communist trade unionists under the aegis of the RILU would have seriously endangered these negotiations, or even made it impossible to continue them. It was therefore logical to hold this international trade-union meeting in secret. Neither its existence nor its conclusions were subsequently reported in the communist press. If it had been publicised, the very fact that it had taken place would have been considered a provocation by the IFTU, and to say anything about decisions taken on communist tactics would have had an even worse effect.

The central theme of the conference was the way to implement the new line of unity, which had just been agreed by the Comintern congress. Lozovsky emphasised that what was involved was not just a change in terminology. They should avoid giving the impression that they would just change the label, but essentially continue the old RTUO policy. In the course of the congress debates, therefore, they had for example decided to leave out any reference to the 'left wing' that the communists intended to form in the trade unions. But a number of problems relating to the united organisations needed to be clarified to make it possible to establish 'unity on the basis of the class struggle': what international orientation should these new organisations have? In what manner should communists be associated together, if fractions were not permitted within the trade unions? And above all: what role could the RILU play in this, if any?

The delegates, approximately sixty in number, gave detailed reports on the situation in their home countries. As a result, it became clear that in no country had the process of unification taken place in accordance with the communists' intentions. Even where the balance of forces made it possible to have genuine negotiations – this was the case in France, in particular – the conditions set

19 A. Lozovsky, *Za edinstvo mirovogo profdvizheniia. 9 avgusta 1935g.*, Moscow, 1935.

by the majority organisations had to be accepted, if the communists wanted to be involved at all.

Even so, they found it easy to make these public concessions, because, as the speakers openly announced, they would subvert the agreements. Benoît Frachon, who was the main spokesman of the CGTU in its negotiations with the CGT, made the point in a particularly dramatic fashion. This was a closed conference, he said without hesitation, so he could speak frankly. The leaders of the CGT were servants of the bourgeoisie. They had had to make many concessions both under the pressure of the overall situation and in confirming agreements reached at local and factory level. The biggest concession was the abandonment of fractions. They had had long arguments about this in the course of the negotiations. They had even vetoed it for a considerable period. They had repeatedly studied the classical Marxist texts. But the texts were one thing, life was another. One could not allow the texts to prevent one from entering the arena of public life. In any case, the party was already exerting great influence in the reunified CGT. At the end of his speech, Frachon also raised a question which, as he admitted, lay outside his competence: should the Russian trade unions perhaps join the IFTU?

Towards the end of the conference, the Finnish Comintern leader Kuusinen made the surprisingly frank comment that the policies pursued in the previous few years had led to a widening of the chasm between the two tendencies in the trade-union movement, but he immediately added that the evaluation of the situation made in 1928 had been entirely correct. In order to take the wind out of the sails of the 'opponents of unity', he explicitly distinguished between 'formal' fractions, which should be abandoned, and 'informal' fractions which should be set up to give work in the trade unions some definite direction. They had to disavow the call for a 'left wing' publicly, and they had to stop considering the left in the old RTUO meaning of a small minority, but the practical realisation of these decisions would have to take place according to the given conditions in each case. It was logical that he now drew attention to a fresh problem facing them, which they had yet to learn how to deal with, but to which he now clearly ascribed vital significance: the appointment of people to leading positions in the trade unions. They should no longer regard themselves as a minority, but endeavour to organise the whole of the revolutionary working class.²⁰ It was only possible to sum up the situation as candidly as this when the

20 A GDR historian summarised Kuusinen's remarks in the following way: 'What was now most important was that, in the interests of practical trade-union unity, the communists should take part in trade-union work in a leading role; the formation of commun-

communists were ‘among friends’, because no statements of this kind were ever made in public. The same thing can of course be said of any discussion of their real intentions and their tactical procedures.

There was hardly any mention of the international dimension of trade-union unification at this conference. Lozovsky stated in his concluding speech that one could only be 50 percent satisfied with the way the speakers had matched up to the task of discussing the measures needed to put into effect the resolutions of the Comintern congress. He then went on to speak of the international aspects himself. There was, he said, a wide range of tactical possibilities, including direct affiliation, organising referenda among the members on the question of which international to join, maintaining organisational independence while staying in contact with both internationals, and so on. Many unions, he added, had no connection with either international. All these things needed to be discussed after the conference. In any case, he said, the correspondence with the IFTU was by no means at an end. He was able to inform the delegates in the closed context of the conference that an official representative of Amsterdam had asked a Soviet delegate to the International Labour Office – the USSR had in the meantime joined this institution, as it had also joined its parent, the League of Nations – to inform the Soviet trade unions that the IFTU would like to have a consultation with them or with the RILU. The IFTU was therefore obviously pursuing two paths simultaneously: officially it rejected their offers,

ist fractions was of less importance’ (Lidia Schewtschenko, ‘Zum Kampf der Kommunistischen Internationale um die Gewerkschaftseinheit in den Jahren 1934–1939’, in *Studien zur Geschichte der Kommunistischen Internationale. Sammelband*, Berlin-GDR, 1974, pp. 308–50, here p. 317). With their mainly verbal renunciation of fractional work, the communists were also giving up the *open* political struggle. After the mergers, the communists rapidly gained the reputation of fractionising in secret, of behaving dishonestly or hypocritically, of seizing hold of undisclosed power positions behind the scenes, and of engaging in other forms of manipulation, particularly because they immediately drew conclusions for trade-union work from every change in the party’s tactical line. In France, for example, they were accused of ‘*noyautage*’ (infiltration) and ‘*colonisation*’ (Lefranc 1967, pp. 373–80, and Dreyfus 1995, pp. 180–3). In such a situation, the communists’ bureaucratic machinations at the top level of the trade unions might well tend to undermine the influence they had previously won. This process has been sketched out by Harvey Levenstein, in ‘Leninists undone by Leninism: Communism and unionism in the United States and Mexico 1935–1939’, *Labor History*, no. 2, 1981, pp. 237–61. Nina Fishman took a somewhat different view of the matter in her study *The British Communist Party and the Trade Unions, 1933–45* (Aldershot, 1995), but she also makes it clear that the communist activists now became part of a trade-union apparatus against which they had previously mounted sharp political attacks.

but unofficially it was sounding them out. Lozovsky finally ended his speech by expressing his surprise that hardly anyone had criticised the RILU. He had expected more criticism. The reason for this was perhaps simply that the RILU had now lost most of its significance for communist trade-union work. The conference finally ended by voting for Heckert's resolution calling on the RILU to make the unity line of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern the basis of its future work.²¹

The decision was therefore made that the communist trade unions should be liquidated all over the world. This meant that communist trade-union work took a new direction. It did not simply a return to the pre-1928 line. The communists were ready, on the one hand, to make concessions in public which would have been inconceivable in the 1920s, but on the other hand, they were just as determined to evade the practical consequences of those concessions, though without admitting this openly. Organisational control was stressed much more than ideological or programmatic influence, and from now on this became the central objective of communist activities in the trade-union movement.

3 The Dissolution of the RILU

It was characteristic of the situation in the communist movement that no one paused to reflect on what place the RILU should have in this whole process of unification, which would involve the dissolution of all its independent sections. Given the formal position, that there were two separate internationals – the Comintern and the RILU – the international trade-union conference of 1935 was a very peculiar event, since it had been called within the framework of the Comintern congress, but was intended to lay down instructions for the work of the RILU's sections. It was obviously tacitly assumed that the RILU would

21 The documents on this trade-union conference are in the RILU archive. They include preparatory material, numerous written reports and the minutes (RGASPI 534/2/119–59). Extracts from Kuusinen's speech were published in *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, no. 3, 1969, pp. 6–9, but without any attempt to indicate where passages had been omitted. The subject is covered in two surveys, which mainly summarise the reports sent from individual countries to demonstrate the worldwide effort being made to achieve trade-union unity. They naturally leave out the 'problematic' organisational details of the way the communists intended to secure influence in the trade unions. See G.M. Adibekov, 'Mezhdunarodnoe profsoiuznoe soveshchanie 1935g. (po arkhivnom materialiam)'; *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia*, no. 3, 1988, pp. 3–16, and Karpachev 1987, pp. 180–93.

continue to exist, but since no really significant tasks had been, or could be, assigned to it, it was equally possible to argue that it was no longer of any importance, and had lost any justification for existing. Ideas of this kind had in fact already surfaced at the beginning of the change, because when the preparatory discussions on the 1935 trade-union conference were held at the ECCI Secretariat, Lozovsky made polemical remarks about 'some comrades' (whose names he did not give) who wanted to liquidate the RILU, and who were thereby giving direct support to Amsterdam's policies.²² In the first instance, however, the task of concretely implementing the conference's decisions was handed over to the RILU leadership.

There was a growing mood in the RILU apparatus in favour of taking yet further steps towards reconciliation with Amsterdam. At the Executive Bureau meeting of 9 November, which approved the negative reaction of the VTsSPS towards the IFTU's proposal of jointly supporting the sanctions imposed by the League of Nations on Italy, a British member expressed the view that they should have 'grappled with' the proposal instead of rejecting it out of hand. The other members of course disagreed with this, and the Bureau therefore gave its full approval to the step taken by the VTsSPS.²³

At the end of November, the Bureau discussed a letter that the Chinese trade-union federation – which was its Chinese section – had sent to both the RILU and the IFTU. It called in a very general way for international unity in view of the danger of world war, Italy's attack on Ethiopia and the Japanese aggression in China. Some members of the Executive Bureau were of the opinion that this letter should be utilised for a renewed attempt to approach the IFTU. Lozovsky rejected the idea, winning majority support for his position. In its reply to the Chinese letter, the Executive Bureau lined up behind the Chinese trade unions, but stressed that the RILU had already made all possible proposals to the IFTU, without receiving a positive response.²⁴

Seen from the point of view of the establishment of national trade-union unity, the new course was successful, provided one can regard it as an exclusively communist initiative and not as the reflection of an elemental social movement from which the communists could not simply detach themselves,

22 As quoted in Adibekov 1988, p. 5.

23 Karpachev 1987, pp. 210–11.

24 Karpachev 1987, pp. 211–12. Karpachev also refers to two articles (by Manuil'sky and Kuusinen) in issues of the RILU periodical for November and December which came down very decisively in favour of the establishment of trade-union unity, describing this as one of the 'lessons' of the Seventh Comintern Congress. He suggests that the articles represented an implicit critique of Lozovsky's hesitant attitude.

on pain of sinking into complete political ineffectiveness. The agenda of the Executive Bureau's meetings at the end of 1935 and the beginning of 1936 was dominated by the issue of the practical organisational steps that needed to be taken in a multiplicity of countries.²⁵ But as an actor on the international stage, especially in relation to the IFTU, the RILU was at a loss as to how to proceed further.

Early in 1936, therefore, there were intensive discussions about its future fate, conducted characteristically enough by the Comintern leadership. On 8 January, Lozovsky composed an initial memorandum on the 'Reorganisation and Concentration of the RILU Apparatus' (see below), and a day later he produced proposals for an international unity campaign in connection with the IFTU congress which was set to take place in London in July.²⁶ Both of these documents simply restated the line already taken by the Seventh Comintern Congress: the RILU apparatus should be reduced in size, but the organisation should continue until it was merged into a new international, on an equal basis with the IFTU, at an international unity congress.

Lozovsky's proposals were discussed at the sitting of the ECCI Secretariat which took place on 11 February. He was commissioned to produce a set of theses with more concrete details. He did this, laying his theses before the Secretariat at the end of February under the title 'The First Results of the Struggle for Unity and the Tasks of the RILU'. Lozovsky's theses painted a broad, panoramic view of developments in most of the countries of the world, and arrived at a positive verdict on communist successes. As had happened so often, Lozovsky exaggerated the real weight of the RILU, expected far too much of presumed allies within the IFTU, and proposed organisational initiatives which were simply unrealistic. He desired discussions with individual representatives of the IFTU left (this applied particularly to the Spaniards) and he hoped the Soviet trade unions would be able to reach an agreement with the ITSS. Most important of all, he wanted to bring the weight of the RILU to bear on the problem by calling a session of its Central Council, which would have the job of issuing new statutes, to replace those drawn up in 1921. He wanted to set up an 'International Fighting Committee for the Unity of the Trade-Union Movement' in Paris. He repeated his sharp rejection of the 'liquidationist tendencies which existed in certain communist parties'.²⁷

25 There is a survey of these meetings in Karpachev 1987, pp. 193–209.

26 The first of these documents is in RGASPI 495/12/119/2–11, and the second is in RGASPI 495/12/119/11–16 and 495/18/212–14.

27 RGASPI 495/18/1073/4, 235–52, and 495/18/1080/19–36. There are draft statutes in RGASPI 534/3/1095.

A special session of the ECCI Secretariat held on 11 March then took a direction which was certainly unwelcome to Lozovsky.²⁸ This was not initially apparent. The agenda included questions of the economic struggle, the first results of the endeavour to secure trade-union unity and the tasks of the RILU, and numerous individual matters. Heckert had serious complaints to make about laziness, inefficiency and corruption in the RILU apparatus, to which a number of functionaries replied with accusations of 'Trotskyism'.²⁹ There were also discussions on how to popularise the Stakhanov movement³⁰ and on the

28 The minutes of this sitting are in RGASPI 495/18/1080/101–89. Dimitrov's speech has also been published in a shortened form in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 5, 1972, pp. 775–80.

29 Heckert had already raised these complaints in the winter of 1935–6, and he was well able to justify them. He had already clashed violently with the party committee in the RILU apparatus. Lozovsky kept out of the limelight, thereby allowing Heckert's opponents a free field. This all happened against the background of the 'purge' of the party apparatus, the start of the hunt for Trotskyists and the systematic instigation of suspicion towards foreigners, starting from the middle of 1936, which were the initial signs of the great wave of terror that was to come. Heckert was already in bad health, and on 7 April he suffered a fatal stroke, clearly as a result of his agitation over the situation. The leaders of the Comintern and the KPD then hastened to sweep the whole matter under the carpet. We have dealt with this in more detail in our essay 'Fritz Heckert – ein Tod unter denkwürdigen Umständen', in *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung*, 1999, pp. 287–96.

30 It was very difficult for most of the leading cadres of the RILU to reconcile themselves with the Stakhanov movement, which began in 1935, because it clearly went against their own experience as trade unionists. Many sittings of leading bodies of the RILU were devoted to this problem. They not only had to work out directives for defending the movement propagandistically in the West against the social democrats. They also had to work out their own personal justifications so as to bring their own sense of trade unionism into line with the Stakhanov movement. The following comments at a sitting of the RILU Secretariat held on 15 February 1936 are an example of this predicament: Monmousseau lamented that, although he was always on the side of the Soviet Union, the material provided on this subject was 'unusable', which was an indirect way of saying that it must be false, or at least inaccurate. Lozovsky promptly interjected that he did not believe Monmousseau. Heckert explained that people had not yet learned to see things through the eyes of the Soviet worker, hence they were faced with a similar situation to the one that obtained a few years previously when there was a campaign against egalitarianism. 'I read in our press, for example, that a bricklayer laid 25,000 bricks in one seven-hour day. I said to myself that only a complete idiot could write something like that about our production ... A few days ago I returned from the sanatorium. I turned on the radio. A fellow was talking. The record of 25,000 bricks has been broken, he said. Now a bricklayer in Leningrad has laid 37,000 bricks. It made me think I was in a madhouse and had lost

interpretation of the most recent international strike movements in the light of the respective roles of the unorganised workers and the skilled workers. It was, however, Dimitrov who turned the discussion in a completely different direction by raising the question of the future of the RILU. He stated quite openly that if necessary the RILU must be dissolved, although this point had not yet been reached. He explicitly criticised Lozovsky for sticking too much to old formulas and confusing the RILU with the Comintern. The RILU would have to adapt itself to the changed conditions and consequently shift its centre of gravity abroad. Dimitrov's intervention became the basis for all further debates.

He had in fact already raised the question of the future fate of the RILU in a personal letter of 27 January 1936 to Stalin. Without taking a firm position himself, he pointed out that 'the Profintern not only fails to contribute to the creation of international trade-union unity but in some sense is even a hindrance to it. It is also important to consider that after the trade-union merger in France and Spain the Profintern has lost its independent trade-union base in the capitalist countries'. He evidently viewed the strength of the RILU's base somewhat differently from Lozovsky. There is no record of a written reply by Stalin. It is very likely that the question was settled orally between Dimitrov and Stalin, because this was often their way of working.³¹

After this, the decision process rapidly took its course. On 11 May, the ECCI Secretariat set up a commission to work out a resolution on the matter.³²

my mind'. Heckert, who had been a bricklayer by trade, was able to solve the problem with a quotation from Stalin, who had said that this was the work of a whole brigade. But, he added, in that case why say such a thing? Without beating about the bush, he pointed out that the Stakhanov movement did not arouse any confidence in the West (RGASPI 534/3/1084/6–24 and 59–64). Niederkirchner, a German representative on the Secretariat, seized on Monmousseau's comments, saying that they showed how unclear even leading comrades were about this question. Even he, however, had to admit that the Soviet press bore a share of the guilt, because it made unbelievable assertions. He then quoted a few more 'triumphal numbers'. These exaggerations, he said, only gave 'Fascists and reformists' the opportunity to attack the Soviet Union (RGASPI 495/18/1080/130–1).

31 There are extracts from the letter in Adibekov 1991, p. 102, and an English translation has been published in Dallin and Firsov 2000, pp. 24–5. There is unfortunately a yawning gap in Dimitrov's diary between January 1935 and August 1936, so that it does not cover the period when it was decided to dissolve the RILU. Dimitrov did not return to the subject in later diary entries; once the decision had been taken he clearly no longer attached any importance to it. (See Georgi Dimitroff, *Tagebücher 1933–1943*, Berlin, 2000) [the English version: *The Diaries of Georgi Dimitroff, 1933–1949*, edited by Ivo Banac, New Haven, 2003, does not contain these entries].

32 RGASPI 495/18/1095/62.

This commission, which consisted of Lozovsky, Togliatti and Dimitrov,³³ would function from then onwards as a 'trade-union troika' [*proftroika*], and thus in fact as the surviving rump of the RILU leadership. On 15 June, the ECCI Secretariat issued some detailed theses. It was evident, it said, that international trade-union unity could be accomplished neither within the IFTU framework nor by merging the IFTU and the RILU. An international committee should therefore be set up, to act as the driving force for unification, not as a new trade-union international. It should be based on the trade unions of France, Spain, Greece and Norway and also include supporters of unity from Great Britain, the USA, Scandinavia and South America. The RILU must now concentrate its efforts on setting up this committee. Accordingly, all parts of its apparatus which were not necessary for that purpose, such as the sections for cadres and international communication, youth, women, and agitation and propaganda and the socio-economic department, should be liquidated. 'The secretariat of the RILU will, in its present composition, become in practice the trade-union department of the Executive Committee of the Comintern'. The international 'auxiliary organisations' of the RILU would also be restructured so as to assist in the creation of the international unity committee.³⁴

All these decisions by the Comintern leadership were implemented without delay by the RILU. In the early part of the year, the Executive Bureau had held its regular meetings, to discuss the usual problems, such as the situation in specific countries (for example, the USA and Mexico) and the line to be taken there, the direction the 'auxiliary organisations' should take in their work, and above all the 'general line'. The last meeting of the Executive Bureau for which the RILU archive contains minutes took place on 16 April 1936, in celebration of Thälmann's fiftieth birthday.³⁵ In view of the punctilious way the RILU archives were conducted, there can be no doubt that this was the very last Executive

33 RGASPI 495/18/1095/67.

34 RGASPI 495/18/1095/71–3. This is the German version, the wording of which is identical to that of the French and English versions. The Russian version (RGASPI 495/18/1095/65–7) also contains a survey of the personnel of the RILU apparatus (50 people, subdivided into political and technical departments). It also contains instructions on how to transfer the 'Intercoms' from the RILU apparatus into the VTsSPS or its member organisations, and on the provision of information about the Soviet trade unions, and it announces the appointment of the 'proftroika'. It is not clear why these passages are missing from the other three versions. The minutes of the ECCI Secretariat meeting give the following as signatories of the resolution: Dimitrov, Moskvín (the NKVD's 'representative' in the Comintern leadership), Togliatti, André Marty, Kuusinen and Wang Ming (RGASPI 495/18/1095/62).

35 RGASPI 534/3/1079.

Bureau sitting, even though the minutes do not contain a decision to bring its meetings to an end. Whether a formal decision was made, or it was implicitly assumed that the end had come, it was plain that the Executive Bureau's function of deciding on the trade-union line to be followed had now passed to the Comintern's leading bodies.

The RILU Secretariat was concerned with concrete questions of day-to-day trade-union work, and it continued its activities until 9 May.³⁶ The 'closed' meetings of the Secretariat, however, which dealt above all with personnel questions, or similar internal matters such as the preservation of documentation on Trotskyism, were continued through the summer, until July, and there was a further meeting on 3 September.³⁷

The budget proposals for 1936, issued at the end of 1935, had at first indicated a growth in expenditure, and reasons were given for this. A little later, Lozovsky made his proposal of 8 January, referred to earlier, for a reorganisation of the personnel, involving a reduction of 22 people in comparison to the previous years' establishment. The total number of employees would now be 135.³⁸ Lozovsky's proposal was now cut down still further. A closed meeting of the Secretariat at the end of March had been devoted to a plan for a large-scale

36 RGASPI 534/3/1088.

37 RGASPI 534/3/1091. There was a closed meeting of the Secretariat on 4 February which decided that all 'counter-revolutionary Trotskyist literature' should be transferred to a secret department which Lozovsky alone had permission to consult. A departmental inspection on 14 February revealed that considerable amounts of 'counter-revolutionary literature' had been preserved, and some of it had not been locked away (RGASPI 534/8/373/40-2). The RILU archive contains some lists of the periodicals which were then transferred to the secret department (RGASPI 534/8/361 and 375). There was a certain amount of bourgeois literature, but most of the material came from communist opposition groups – either the Trotskyists, with their *Biulleten' Opositsii*, or the German right communists who published *Gegen den Strom*. There were also the publications of earlier communist groups. The first publications by the RILU, written by people like Nin, Rosmer, Walcher, Tomsky and so on, were now certainly regarded as nothing more than 'ideological contraband'. Measures of this kind were an early expression of the atmosphere of mass terror which would reach its height later, during 1937. The terror had in fact begun at the end of 1934 after Kirov's assassination, and it already affected the RILU. See below for its overall impact.

38 RGASPI 534/8/349/1-2, 534/8/365/2-11 and 495/12/119/2-11. A general survey of the personnel (*Shtaty Profintern*) dated 1 January gave a total of 164 employees, classified as members of the Executive Bureau and the Central Council, members of the various department and sections and technicians. As late as 1933, the RILU apparatus still comprised 300 people. At the end of that year, this figure was halved (Karpachev 1987, p. 215).

celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of the RILU, which would fall due in the summer, including a banquet and an exhibition,³⁹ but on 14 April it was decided to reduce the RILU's personnel by half.⁴⁰ In June, there was a further reduction to approximately fifty employees in the context of the move to concentrate the RILU's activities on the creation of an international unity committee.⁴¹ This process did not unfold without complications, as is shown by the appearance of numerous complaints which were handled at Secretariat sittings during the next few months. Since the RILU's activities were to continue, although on a reduced scale, grounds for dismissal had to be given, which included inefficiency or political unreliability. Protests were made about this. The victims also protested about failure to pay money during the transition period, and about receiving notices to quit on account of their dismissal. To quote just one example, the KPD delegation to the ECCI made the following sharp protest to the RILU Secretariat on 21 June: 'It has come to our attention that some of the German comrades, in particular Comrade Ewers, have been dismissed from the Profintern apparatus in a manner which is absolutely intolerable. We should like to ask you to revisit these matters, and to concede to Comrade Ewers the same rights as other comrades, to pay him the arrears of salary that are owed to him and to provide him with money to cover the transition period'.⁴² These problems were certainly also a result of the overhasty and inconsiderate way in which the whole process of shrinking the organisation was carried out.

Another measure connected with the reduction of the RILU's personnel was the decision to return the foreign representatives in the organisation to their own countries. On 31 March, Manuil'sky, who was one of the Soviet representatives in the Comintern, received from Lozovsky a list of 35 foreigners who could be sent back. Most of these would have been foreigners employed by the RILU.⁴³ These decisions sometimes gave rise to considerable complications, as was shown by a vehement protest received in August 1936 from the leader of the Czech Red Trade Unions. Their representative on the RILU had returned home shortly before, temporarily as he thought, to take part in their congress. In Prague, he received news from his wife, who had come to Moscow with him and was waiting there for his return, that she had been given notice to quit

39 RGASPI 534/3/1090/24.

40 RGASPI 534/3/1090/36–7.

41 On this point, see both the above-mentioned ECCI Secretariat meeting of 15 June and the closed RILU Secretariat meeting of 1 June (RGASPI 534/3/1091/6–7).

42 RGASPI 534/8/373/118.

43 RGASPI 534/8/368.

their flat and would have to set out on her return journey to Czechoslovakia, without any reason having been given by the authorities. Even on the official level, the Czech Red Trade Unions had not been informed why their representation in Moscow had been 'liquidated', as the protest put it.⁴⁴ Moreover, the RILU now had to abandon its 'public face', its press organs. This was decided in July by the Secretariat and immediately put into effect.⁴⁵ Its Russian-language journal (*Krasnyi internatsional profsoiuzov*) appeared for the last time during that month (issue number 13).⁴⁶ The German edition had already ceased publication in 1933.

At the beginning of 1937, the personnel of the RILU numbered 50, while on 1 February 1937, there were still 48.⁴⁷ On 17 February, another closed meeting of the Secretariat took place. It discussed some personnel matters and then resolved to cease its activities.⁴⁸ With this, all independent action by the RILU apparatus had come to an end. From now on it could do no more than perform supply services for the Comintern. Now it was mainly concerned with dismantling its auxiliary organisations, as is shown by its correspondence with the Comintern, in which a wide range of proposals was debated, including amalgamation with other organisations, change in function, and direct dissolution.⁴⁹

This was also one of the chief themes discussed by the '*proftroika*', which only met sporadically, however. After the meeting of 8 June 1936, at which it was set up, it met again on 13 December and on a few further occasions in the next few months.⁵⁰ The other main subject of discussion was the attempt to establish the international unity committee, to which end a number of ingenious plans were devised, which all depended on co-operation with the IFTU left, who were the advocates of trade-union unity. All these plans turned

44 RGASPI 534/3/1097/56–8.

45 RGASPI 534/3/1091.

46 This has been demonstrated by a thorough search of the issues available in SAPMO. The last issue of the German-language bulletin of the RILU, *Ingewpress*, appeared at the end of April (as number 8). This is the latest copy in the Exile Archive of the German National Library.

47 RGASPI 534/8/383/1–5.

48 RGASPI 534/3/1113.

49 The correspondence is preserved in RGASPI 534/3/1114 and 1115.

50 The minutes of these meetings are not in the RILU archive but in the 'Togliatti Secretariat' holdings (RGASPI 495/12/114 and 115). Dimitrov mentions them twice in his diary, but without giving any indication of the subjects treated in them (Dimitroff, *Tagebücher*, pp. 142–56).

out to be illusory. An international unity committee proved impossible to establish. In the course of 1937, therefore, the idea simply disappeared from the agenda. The discussion of international unity would develop in quite a different way, without the intervention of a seemingly independent intermediary body of this kind. Finally, on 27 December 1937, the RILU, or more precisely all that was left of it, namely its apparatus, was dissolved quietly and without fanfare by a decision of the ECCI Secretariat. Its 'estate' (the library, the archive and the financial resources) was handed over to the Comintern and 'other appropriate authorities' under the supervision of a commission consisting of Lozovsky, Moskvín and Kolarov.⁵¹ The reason for this abrupt decision, which in any case only set the seal on what had already effectively been the case for some time, since the 'rump' of the RILU no longer appeared in public, was no doubt the negotiation between the VTsSPS and the IFTU which had taken place in Moscow some weeks earlier (see section 4 on this). The RILU apparatus no longer had a reason to exist. Lozovsky now began a new career as both a historian in the party training school, and, more importantly, assistant Soviet foreign minister. In this post, his international experience was again called upon by the Soviet state, although a state office of this kind naturally enjoyed less prestige than a leading role in the international workers' movement.⁵²

The main peculiarity of the process by which the RILU was dissolved was undoubtedly its secrecy. The outside world did not get to know of these decisions. The RILU lost its public face when its press organs ceased to appear, in July 1936, but its opponent, the IFTU, continued to act as if it still existed. The discussions with the IFTU leadership before the negotiations in Moscow were dominated by the IFTU's endeavour to prevent the inclusion of the RILU in them. They had no idea that it was by now a shadow of its former self.⁵³ In

51 RGASPI 495/18/1230/79.

52 After he had occupied this new position for some time, his career path then led through the Soviet Information Bureau and the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the Second World War, but it still ended in Stalin's jails (and in front of a firing squad), when he was caught up after 1948 in the last great Stalinist purge, this time conducted on an openly anti-Semitic basis. See the record of the secret trial of the members of the Anti-Fascist Committee (the printed version is unfortunately incomplete), at which another former RILU functionary, Iuzefovich, was also in the dock: V.P. Naumov (ed.), *Nepravednyi sud. Poslednii stalinskii rasstrel. Stenogramma sudebnogo protsessa nad chlenami Evreiskogo Antifashistskogo Komiteta*, Moscow, 1994, particularly pp. 141–97.

53 This was clear from the discussions at sittings of the IFTU Executive Committee both before an IFTU delegation went to Moscow and after it returned in November 1937. See below.

May 1938, the journal of the Wobblies referred simply to the 'lost international' about which no one knew anything any more.⁵⁴

The main reason for this secrecy was no doubt that the procedure adopted was completely contrary to the RILU's statutes. Under the statutes, only the RILU could decide to dissolve itself, or take steps in that direction. The RILU's 1921 statutes, which were still valid, did not even contain any provisions in which such an outcome was envisaged. In fact the way the dissolution process unfolded showed that the situation of the RILU was exactly what it had always strenuously denied: it was dependent on the Comintern, and it was there that the actual decisions were made.

For this reason, the description of the dissolution of the RILU as a 'self-dissolution' [*samorospusk*], applied in Soviet historiography, is fundamentally false. Not until 1991, with the exploitation of the sources in the RILU archive, did a self-critical view emerge.⁵⁵ The true situation was that this was a liquidation carried out for political reasons by an agency that, formally speaking, had no right to do this, with the result that the whole process had to be disguised.

Although the RILU was already much reduced by 1936, this did not prevent it from being struck, even in its reduced form, by the full force of the Stalinist mass terror which has entered history under the euphemistic name of 'the purges'. Even the first phase of the terror, which began at the end of 1934, after the assassination of Kirov, led to a series of arrests of members of the RILU apparatus, though this phase was still conducted as an 'audit' or '*proverka*' of the Soviet apparatus with the aim of increasing its efficiency.⁵⁶ A report dating

54 '... which seems to have disappeared, without leaving a trace of its existence behind' (Joseph Wagner, 'The lost International', *One Big Union Monthly*, no. 5, May 1938, pp. 20–3).

55 On this, see Adibekov 1991, pp. 101–4.

56 The charge that the apparatus was utterly sloppy, indeed that it had failed in its task, was central to Heckert's criticisms (see above) and it provoked a strong reaction. A characteristic example was the construction of an International Trade Union School for the RILU. An audit of the work in January 1936 revealed unbelievable details (these were probably what set off Heckert's critique). No proper estimate of the cost had been made. The drawings by the architectural department were described by an engineer as 'the work of an apprentice'. A works supervisor, who was no longer involved in the project, had spent at most two hours at the site. For the whole of the time, the RILU had paid no attention to the building work. Eventually a new team was put in to manage the project, and its first job was to work out fresh plans for the whole thing (RGASPI 534/3/1083/27–31). At the beginning of February 1936, a detailed resolution was passed laying down a 'technical minimum', which established minimum qualifications for employment in various parts of the RILU apparatus. According to the post in question, they ranged from knowledge of languages to knowledge of specific forms of literature and of the trade-union movement

from March 1936 on 'the provisional lessons of the purging of the apparatus of alien and dubious elements' referred to 58 dismissals for political reasons in the previous 18 months; nine of those dismissed had been arrested.⁵⁷ Since the massive dismantling of the whole apparatus began shortly afterwards, these arrests did not leave any gaps and the replenishment of the staff initially called for by the ECCI and the CC became unnecessary.

A closer watch started to be kept on the RILU's personnel in the spring of 1936, almost at the same time as the confiscation and safe storage of 'counter-revolutionary literature' already mentioned was taking place. It was above all the foreign employees who were subjected to this, as well as everyone who could be proved to have had some connection in the past with party oppositions. All the foreign personnel of the RILU had to fill in record cards outlining the circumstances of their entry into the USSR. Staff lists were drawn up giving information on the status of each foreigner (whether they still had foreign citizenship, and whether they had been transferred to the Soviet communist party or still belonged to their former communist party).⁵⁸ If there were cases of previous oppositional activity, these were of course subjected to a thorough

and its organisation (RGASPI 534/8/374/8–20). If such resolutions had to be passed in 1936, it is easy to conclude that until then these requirements had largely been ignored.

57 RGASPI 534/8/365/41–4 and 45–7. Various reasons were given for the arrests. Alleged membership of a Ukrainian nationalist organisation was one (clearly because the person in question had been an ensign in the Austro-Hungarian army in the First World War). Being of noble or bourgeois origin was another. Many people were simply accused of being members of a counter-revolutionary organisation. In one case the embezzlement of 72,000 rubles was the charge. Those who were dismissed without being arrested were people who did not enjoy the authorities' confidence, who had connections with class enemies, who had engaged in anti-Soviet conversations, or were simply morally depraved persons who were incapable of fulfilling, or unwilling to fulfil, the requirements of their work.

58 These data are to be found in RGASPI 534/8/367 and 369. It is noticeable that it was above all the lower ranking employees, consisting of the technicians and the 'ordinary' political activists, who were Russians. There were very few non-party employees, but most of the employees first joined the AUCP (B) at the beginning of the 1930s. There was nothing unusual about this, and a parallel process has been observed among the Comintern's employees by Peter Huber (in 'Kontroll- und Repressionsmechanismen in der Zentrale der Kommunistischen Internationale', *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 1, 1994, pp. 1–28, and *Stalins Schatten in der Schweiz. Schweizer Kommunisten in Moskau: Gefangene und Verteidiger der Komintern*, Zürich, 1994, particularly pp. 17–47). Vatlin (1998) provides a survey of the impact of the terror on the Comintern from 1936 onwards.

investigation.⁵⁹ In any case, it was now possible for the RILU to deal with these problems without much trouble, in the normal course of the staff reductions it was forced to implement. (Heckert's opponents, for instance, were simply dismissed a few days after his death in the middle of April 1936).⁶⁰ By 1937, the personnel lists included very few foreigners.⁶¹

After the first show trial, in August 1936, and the beginning of mass arrests, the RILU apparatus again came under attack. A list dated 7 August 1937 gave the names of 12 people who had been arrested since February (some along with their families). Typically, the RILU had not been officially informed of the charges.⁶² Throughout these months, the NKVD conducted a 'brisk' correspondence with the RILU. It demanded detailed information both on present

59 Slutsky, the long-serving secretary of the mineworkers' IPC, was one such case. He had been a Ukrainian *Borotbist* (a Left Socialist Revolutionary) in the early years of the revolution, and he first became a member of the communist party when the whole group joined in 1920. He then immediately supported Trotsky's position in the trade-union controversy of that year. (His biographical data are in RGASPI 534/8/373/37–8). This 'biographical settlement of accounts' was also closely connected with serious accusations relating to the working practices of the mineworkers' committee. An 'audit' [*proverka*] of the committee led the authorities to raise charges of wasting money, of inadequate political work, etc. (RGASPI 534/3/1073). Slutsky's was an unusual case, however. The lists drawn up in the spring of 1936 give few examples of employees who could be accused of former oppositional activities. Most of these people were foreigners. One reason for this is that most of the former members of opposition currents within the AUCP (B), who would certainly have figured in the RILU apparatus in the mid-1920s, would have been removed in previous 'audits'. This is shown by the fact that the list of 58 people dismissed since 1934 contains no former members of party opposition groupings.

60 See the list of the names of those dismissed which was issued in April, immediately after the decision to prune the RILU apparatus (RGASPI 495/12/119/103).

61 RGASPI 534/8/383.

62 Accompanying this list was a sort of letter of complaint sent by one of Lozovsky's colleagues to the Moscow NKVD on 9 August. Those arrested, the letter said, had lived in the RILU's own apartment house, some of them for a long time. Since the members of their families were still living there, and the RILU had not received any news about the 'legal' status of the arrestees, such as whether they had been condemned or not, extraordinary complications had arisen. In this situation, the RILU could not take any steps to remove them. The writer of the letter asked the NKVD either to give the necessary information or itself to take measures to 'remove' them, which was a scarcely disguised way of asking for their arrest. With the evident intention of informing the NKVD about its future possible victims, the list contained a precise enumeration of the family members living in RILU accommodation, giving the dimensions of their dwellings in square metres, and the number of rooms occupied (RGASPI 534/8/382/28–30).

employees and on former employees who had clearly been arrested in the meantime. A large group of Poles fell into this category. They were hit particularly hard by the arrests, in the context of Stalin's decision to liquidate the whole of the Polish communist party.⁶³ A letter of 20 July from Lozovsky to Ezhov implies that the NKVD was even conducting an investigation into a kind of conspiracy within the RILU apparatus, although the alleged conspirators were two people who had not been employed by the RILU since 1933.⁶⁴ The nature of these arrests is illuminated by the fact that the RILU was left in the dark about the circumstances surrounding them and the resulting charges. In September, for example, the NKVD was asked about the arrest of the husbands of two female translators. The latter had until then had permission to make translations of secret documents. This permission was immediately withdrawn, but the NKVD had sent absolutely no information to the RILU about the matter. The RILU authorities therefore did not know whether these translators ought to be allowed to continue their employment in any capacity at all.⁶⁵

4 The Sequel: The Russian Trade Unions Again Attempt to Enter the IFTU

The total liquidation of the RILU did not solve the problem of 'international trade-union unity'. Even while it still existed, the hope that it could, so to speak, negotiate on an equal footing with the IFTU turned out to be vain. At this stage, the RILU was simply ignored, since the communist trade unions (at least most of them) created unity by joining the national IFTU organisations. All that remained to be decided was the old problem of the entry of the Russian trade unions into the IFTU.⁶⁶

63 On 20 July 1937, the RILU sent over to the NKVD documents relating to 33 former employees, mainly Poles. All that has survived of this information is a carbon copy of the accompanying letter (RGASPI 534/8/382/24).

64 For this letter, see RGASPI 534/8/382/17–18. See also the comments made by Adibekov (1991, p. 108).

65 RGASPI 534/8/382/35. It also emerges from the correspondence of this time that the RILU systematically informed the NKVD about the new personnel it employed. But the correspondence also dealt with apparently 'harmless' matters. Thus it was only possible to obtain tickets to performances at the Bolshoi, or to the big demonstrations on Red Square, through the NKVD, probably because of the fear of assassination attempts.

66 This survey of the renewed 'Russian discussion' in the IFTU is based on *Tätigkeit und Bestrebungen des Internationalen Gewerkschaftsbundes 1936–1938*, 3 parts, Paris, 1938, part 1,

The question had been raised at the London congress of the IFTU in July 1936, mainly because communist delegates were present for the first time (in particular in the CGT delegation). The Norwegian delegation had proposed a resolution proposing that they make contact with both the VTsSPS and the RILU. This only received support from the leading communist delegate in the CGT, Frachon, and the Spaniard Largo Caballero, the head of the socialist UGT. Negotiations with the Russian trade unions alone, in contrast, were not completely ruled out by the other delegations. The national trade-union centres that opposed co-operation with the communists – in particular those of Belgium, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Great Britain – demanded that the IFTU appeal to *all* trade unions still standing outside it to enter negotiations. They were thinking above all of the AFL. Jouhaux, who was perhaps more inclined towards including the Russians, also supported this formula. Only George Hicks⁶⁷ of the TUC, the only member of the old TUC left of the early 1920s who was still active, emphasised that securing Russian affiliation was a far more important step towards achieving international unity than the affiliation of any other trade union. His intervention achieved nothing, however. By a clear majority, the congress resolved to make a general approach to all other trade-union confederations.

But before the IFTU was able to take any initiative at all towards the Russians, there was an event which revealed the chasm that divided them and led to a public confrontation: the first Moscow show trial in August 1936 against Zinoviev, Kamenev and others. This provoked a joint protest by the IFTU and the LSI, which was greeted with fury in Moscow. Not until October did the General Secretary of the IFTU, Schevenels, send an invitation to the Russians to open discussions on affiliation, in accordance with the resolution of the London congress. He included a copy of the IFTU's statutes, and he made it clear that Russia's entry into the IFTU would mean that it was joining an organisation which already existed and had its own political character. The Russians would 'affiliate' to the IFTU and not 'unite' with it. What was demanded of the Russians was simply submission. That was a very narrow interpretation of the

pp. 29–45 and part II, pp. 1–11. In addition, we have made use of the following secondary works: Mario Mancini, 'La FSI e l'unificazione sindacale internazionale (1936–1939)', *Quaderni della rassegna sindacale*, no. 92, September–October 1981, pp. 130–48; and Erwin Oberländer, 'Die Moskauer Verhandlungen zwischen IGB und Sowjetgewerkschaften, November 1937', *International Review of Social History*, no. 3, 1980, pp. 350–94 (this contains the minutes of the negotiations along with an extensive introduction).

67 Hicks had visited Russia in 1934 in response to an invitation. He wanted to meet Tomskey, but was not allowed to do so, on grounds that appeared to be spurious (Citrine 1936, p. 81).

London resolution, and it naturally also raised the question of what there was to negotiate about, if anything. In any case, the AFL was prepared to affiliate on these conditions, which it did in July 1937. This body of course did not have any disagreements of principle with the majority in the IFTU. Moreover, by joining now it was able to bar the way to its new rival in America, the CIO. For those member organisations of the IFTU which were opposed to any co-operation with communist trade unions, the new addition represented a welcome reinforcement.

A reply from Moscow was not slow in arriving. There was a vehement public reaction from the VTsSPS. The union claimed that it had not received an invitation at all. When the IFTU sent its letter again, the VTsSPS did not react, for a reason we do not know.⁶⁸ This situation changed in July 1937 when the IFTU Executive Committee held a meeting in Warsaw. Against the resistance of a minority, it was laid down that the basis for a discussion with the Russians was the London declaration and nothing more. Everything beyond that was a subject for negotiation. The Russians finally reacted to this statement, and in August they declared that they were ready to engage in discussions.

In spite of a considerable amount of scepticism and political unease, expressed above all by the IFTU president, Citrine, the IFTU Executive agreed at meetings held in September and the middle of November on the composition of a delegation to Moscow, consisting of Schevenels, Jouhaux and the under-secretary of the IFTU, Jiří Stolz, and on the basis for the negotiations. The only subject to be discussed was the affiliation of the VTsSPS. The RILU, and the question of 'international unity', would not be up for discussion. Jouhaux was, however, successful in preventing the meeting from presenting the Russians with excessively harsh conditions. The delegation's mandate also allowed it to discuss Soviet proposals for alterations to the statutes.

The negotiations took place between 23–26 November 1937 in Moscow. The three members of the IFTU delegation faced an equal number of Russians (the chairman of the VTsSPS and two secretaries of the union). The fundamental difference in the attitude of each side ('affiliation versus unification') was apparent from the outset. The IFTU representatives indicated their readiness to make certain concessions, such as over the level of the Russian membership contribution, as laid down by the statutes. But there were three conditions laid down

68 In the present state of knowledge, one can only speculate about the grounds for this silence. Did the union simply rule out unconditional affiliation, or refuse to discuss joining on the conditions set by the IFTU? Or was the reason perhaps that the VTsSPS apparatus was so disorganised by the mass arrests that were just starting that it was unable to react at all to the letter?

by the Russians. First, an extraordinary congress must be called to give effect to their entry into the IFTU, so as to turn the whole thing into the desired demonstration that 'unity' was being achieved. Second, the IFTU should be chaired by three people, one of them a Russian, and the organisation should have a Russian secretary. Third, finally, the IFTU had to guarantee that the contributions from the Soviet trade unions would not be used for 'anti-Soviet propaganda'. These conditions, which related to the organisation of the IFTU, were accompanied by programmatic demands which amounted to shifting the IFTU onto the line of an anti-Fascist popular front, above all in matters of international politics. This point did not stir up much debate. It was, however, the organisational demands of the VTsSPS which would ultimately turn out to constitute an insurmountable barrier to its admission. There were divergences within the IFTU delegation. It was easy to perceive that Schevenels and Jouhaux differed in the degree to which they were ready to make a compromise with the Russians. But they were in complete agreement in rejecting any attempt to question the policies previously pursued by the IFTU. Finally both sides agreed to sign a joint communiqué, to which the Russian conditions and the answer by the IFTU delegation were appended. The general tone was still optimistic, as far as a future Russian entry into the IFTU was concerned.

After the results of the Moscow discussions were announced, there were immediate protests, particularly from the TUC. When the Executive Committee of the IFTU met in the middle of January 1938, it became clear that the Russians had not presented a simple application to join, but they had set far-reaching conditions. Another obstacle was that no one knew anything precise about the fate of the RILU, and it was feared that the Russians might pull this rabbit out of their hat again. Jouhaux, however, thought the discussion had shown that the RILU was in practice finished as an organisation.⁶⁹ The way the IFTU Executive Committee's views were going was now evident, even though no decision had yet been taken and the documentation would first have to be sent to the member organisations of the IFTU for further discussion. The blow finally fell at the Oslo meeting of the Committee in May 1938. Only the French (with certain reservations on the part of the non-communists), the Spaniards and the Mexicans were ready to compromise, while all the other representatives were fiercely opposed to doing so. There were even threats to withdraw from the IFTU if the Russians were admitted. The character of the VTsSPS as a trade

69 In his first statement after his return at the end of December, Jouhaux pointed out that there had been no talk of 'international unity' in Moscow. In other words, he said, the RILU was finished (quoted in Wagner 1938, p. 22).

union was fundamentally questioned, on the grounds that it was communist state organisation, especially in view of the most recent experience of the Soviet purges. Jouhaux tried hard to mediate, but he was unsuccessful. The Committee voted by a large majority not to continue its negotiations with the Russians.

The worsening international situation after the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia then suddenly brought the theme back onto the agenda. The TUC performed an about-turn on the issue of Russian membership during the winter of 1938-9. An alliance with the Russian state was needed against Hitler, and international co-operation with the Russian trade unions might help to promote this, the British trade unionists openly declared. The British proposal to offer the Soviet trade unions the opportunity of joining was put before the Zürich IFTU congress of July 1939. It was rejected. Moreover, the only countries to support the proposal were France, Mexico and Norway (the Spanish national trade-union centre no longer counted, since it had become an exile organisation after the defeat of the republic).

With this, the Russian attempt to join the IFTU finally ended in failure. Not until the new situation created by the Second World War and the formation of the victorious allied coalition did the issue again become relevant. But now the Russian application was no longer directed towards the IFTU, an institution that was regarded as obsolete even by its former members. Instead, the issue provided the impetus behind the creation of a new, unified international, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). This was in appearance a triumph for the Soviet 'unity line'. A mere four years later, however, in 1949, the rift between the communist and the non-communist trade unions and the establishment by the latter of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) demonstrated that the rival networks of the prewar period and the confrontations between them were more enduring and more powerful than the impulse to unity.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the RILU was liquidated in order to improve the prospects for the admission of the Russian trade unions into the IFTU. But under the constellation of forces which prevailed in the years immediately preceding the war, this expectation could not be fulfilled. When it did come about, with the formation of the World Federation of Trade Unions towards the end of the Second World War as a 'unified trade-union international' consisting of the former IFTU (without the AFL), the Russian trade unions and the second largest USA trade-union federation, the CIO, the prerequisite for this was exactly what the Russians had tried to achieve in 1936–7, along with those forces in the IFTU that wanted to reach an agreement with them, namely an anti-Hitler coalition between the Western Powers and the Soviet Union. It was this that made possible the establishment in 1945 of the World Federation of Trade Unions. The coming of the Cold War, however, very quickly deprived the world of this prerequisite. The WFTU split into two parts in 1949 along the political dividing line between Social Democrats and communists. One can therefore assume that there was no firm basis for a joint organisation. At the state level there were diplomatic relations, but on fundamental trade-union matters there was no agreement.

A specific situation made possible the establishment of the RILU and a specific conjuncture led to its dissolution. Over and above this, however, it still remains possible to locate its history within a broader chronological context. Many of the discussions which appear so specific to the period after 1917 and in particular to the initial years of the RILU – discussions covering the independence of the trade unions, the proper role of the strike and the relationship between trade unions and politics in general – were already being conducted beforehand, during the period before the First World War, at a time when the international trade-union movement originated. This puts into context the apparent novelty of the strategic and programmatic disagreements which surfaced during the establishment of the RILU. The political needs of the Soviet trade unions emerged as the specific feature which ultimately had its origin in the interests of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state. Not even the concrete model that was laid down for relations between the RILU and the Comintern, namely the direction of the trade union by the party, was original. It was actually borrowed from Kautsky and the 'orthodox' Social Democracy of the years before 1914. On the other hand, it is clear that the coming together of the syndicalists and the Bolsheviks after 1917 was by no means the result of any kind of misunderstanding. It arose from their

common conviction that the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism was necessary.

The RILU was able to draw on this common conviction when it was founded. In addition, the ideas the syndicalists had upheld against Social Democracy before 1914, such as on the role of the economic strike and its 'politicisation', were at least of equal significance in bringing them closer to the Bolsheviks. It would, however, be an oversimplification, and therefore a mistake, not to pick out the discontinuities as well as the similarities. This point relates above all to the increasing instrumentalisation of the RILU in the service of changing and in part completely contradictory political strategies, which can in turn only be explained with reference to the specific context of overall Soviet policy at the given moment. The first 'storm and stress' phase of 1920–1 was followed by the turn to an (unachievable) united front in 1922–3. Disagreement over the question of whether the RILU should be dissolved, in order to gain the admission of the Russian trade unions to the IFTU in return, was expressed in the confrontation between Tomsy and Lozovsky, and in the contradiction between support for the international unity campaigns and appeals to strengthen the RILU. All these things stimulated centrifugal tendencies. The RILU's founding generation quickly found itself outside the international when the Stalinisation of the Soviet Union brought with it the abandonment of a strategy of world revolution, and it played an important part in the formation of communist opposition groups after the mid-1920s. Then, after 1929, the turn towards 'ultra-leftism' inflated the importance of the RILU on paper while in practice it declined into political insignificance. And finally, at the end of the story, the RILU was seen as an organisational obstacle that needed to be quietly evaded, as if it were an embarrassment that called for diplomatic concealment.

These developments were accompanied by an increasing diminution of the trade-union character of the RILU's organisations. We have therefore made no attempt in this book to measure them against a 'normative model' of what a trade union should be. Under that model, the RILU's organisations could not be regarded as 'proper' trade unions because, first, they did not carry out their function of protecting the economic interests of the workers successfully, second, they did not work to maintain trade-union achievements, and third, they were led by 'political factions'. (On this point, the reader is referred to the definition by Sidney and Beatrice Webb quoted in the first chapter). Even without taking this view of the RILU though, it must still be noted that the organisation was not successful and ended its days in an impossible position, from which it was unable to extricate itself.

At the beginning, the RILU's programme asserted that its activity was independent in character, although carried on in close connection with the com-

munist party. This was a move to keep the support of the syndicalists. It also fitted in with the fact that in the struggle within the trade-union movement, the formation of the RILU was an open challenge to 'Amsterdam'. The supporters of the RILU regarded themselves as a revolutionary minority that was endeavouring to revolutionise the trade unions through the clash of different tendencies. In line with this, the RILU also had significance as an *international* leadership and an instrument of centralisation. But in proportion as the various changes in the line required it to turn in contradictory directions, the RILU decayed into an object that could be manipulated at will. The different lines it took were contradictory and arbitrary, since a given policy could be replaced by its opposite from one day to the next. This also placed a question mark over its claim to be a trade-union body, since its trade-union character was subordinated to the changing needs of politics. In fact, the successive strategies pursued by the RILU in the course of its existence always followed the changes in the line adopted by the party and the Comintern.

It was a logical result of this that the RILU suffered a rapid loss of significance, both externally, in relation to the outside world, in other words the international trade-union movement, and internally, in the eyes of the Soviet leadership. At the beginning it still tried to stand on its own feet, but it very quickly became a political bargaining chip, which the leadership was ready to exchange eventually for a greater gain. By the end, it had been reduced to a purely bureaucratic apparatus which could simply be dissolved without any untoward consequences. The RILU (unlike the IFTU) was an extremely centralised international body from the very outset, run strictly from the top down by the 'instructions' its members received. This indisputably aggravated its inability to resist the process by which it was converted into a group of functionaries. The curious way in which the RILU's leadership was put together also contributed to its weakness, because although it was repeatedly re-elected at congresses, its actual composition (leaving aside a tiny, stable nucleus) was constantly altered by co-optation.

Formal trade-union democracy within the organisation was also abolished in practice. This development corresponded, not accidentally, to changes in the amount of independent activity permitted to the Russian trade unions. Until approximately 1928, during the New Economic Policy, they had been able to expand their role continuously. After 1929, however, their modest sphere of influence was progressively restricted, and they finally suffered a veritable obliteration of their organisational structure, by which they were transformed into agencies of the state, pure and simple.

The purpose of communist trade-union policy in the West underwent corresponding changes. At first, the main objective was to mobilise the workers

in strikes and to revolutionise the trade unions 'from below'. Much later, under the banner of the Popular Front, it was seen as most important to secure leading positions with the trade unions, in other words to exert influence 'from above'. In this context, the RILU lost all significance, since its open intervention in trade-union affairs, as practised in the previous period, could only be harmful to the cause. Until then, all the congresses and other official manifestations of the RILU had taken place in public. This procedure was now an obstacle to the communists' intended integration into trade-union leadership structures. The RILU's liquidation was therefore a logical result of the change in communist trade-union policy which had taken place in the preceding years. Moreover, as is well-known, the end of the RILU was followed by the dissolution of the Comintern only a few years later. This fact indicates that what was actually happening was an overall shift in the foreign policy strategy of the Soviet Union under Stalin. For the latter, gaining spheres of influence and securing them by diplomatic means had priority over bringing revolution to the West.

In addition, the failure of the RILU's attempts to gain influence in the International Trade Secretariats, using a wide range of tactical means, from the application for Russian membership as a starting-point to the creation of its own ITSS with mass influence, demonstrated the extent to which it remained, in the final analysis, a minority phenomenon. This failure with the ITSS was the clearest expression of its inability ever to construct a stable organisation with even the smallest degree of continuity. The fact that it was able to direct its attention to the colonial and semi-colonial countries ignored by Amsterdam, and even to secure great, but temporary, successes there, did not alter its fundamental weakness. It should, however, be admitted that it did consistently exploit the advantage it possessed of being unconnected to any colonial power, or, more precisely, of standing in open opposition to the colonial powers, at least until the turn to the Popular Front policy. This was of great significance for the development of communist movements in those parts of the world.

The existence of the RILU was of tremendous importance for Lozovsky personally. Through his function as its General Secretary, he acquired a leading role in the international communist movement to which he was not 'predestined' in the eyes of the Bolsheviks. He was indebted for his rise to the top to a whole series of accidental factors. Once he had arrived there, it was doubtless owing to his special skills that he succeeded in maintaining his position at the head of the RILU at a time when all other leaders of the international communist movement were successively losing their footing. The first prerequisite for this was naturally his ability to display constant flexibility in face of changes in the party line, sometimes even before they happened. It also helped that he never put himself in the kind of exposed position that would have brought him into

conflict with such changes. Once the RILU had been dissolved, however, he lost his international position. He was no longer the leader of an international, but merely a Soviet state functionary. Even after that, his international experience still made it possible for him to act as an international spokesman for the Soviet Union, first as deputy foreign minister, then after the war began as the head of the Soviet Information Bureau and then finally the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. But these were purely executive functions, which he was only qualified to exercise because of his knowledge of international affairs and his proven loyalty to the party. A real position of political leadership, or even a claim to such a position, was no longer attached to the posts he held.¹

In general, then, the RILU proved to be an important and influential factor for the international communist movement in its earlier years. It allowed the Bolsheviks to win support from a movement which had previously been sceptical towards Marxist social democracy, and this also made possible an overall broadening of its influence. Later on, after the communist movement had become consolidated, the RILU came to be regarded as an obstacle to its further progress, which was also too strongly associated with the expectation and promise of revolution. The delay in dissolving it, which allowed it to exist for a total of sixteen years from its foundation, can only be explained by the damaging consequences that the Stalinist leadership feared would result from an earlier liquidation.

The RILU was an expression of the deep divisions brought into existence in the international trade-union movement by the First World War, and it was incapable of overcoming those divisions. It enjoyed some success in its initial years, but it must be admitted that its real significance was of very short duration. In its sixteen years of formal existence, it simulated a power and a strength that it did not possess. Important as its role was in certain specific situations, the deadly opponent so often conjured up in Amsterdam's proclamations was in reality far less influential and far less successful than the outside world believed it to be.

1 Lozovsky's fate after 1948 will not be examined here in any more detail. See chapter 9, section 3, footnote 52.

Lozovsky and the Bolsheviks before 1920: A Biographical Sketch

Lozovsky was born on 16 (28 NS) March 1878 in a village in the Alexandrovsk District of the Government [*guberniia*] of Ekaterinoslav (renamed Dnepropetrovsk in 1926). His original name was Solomon Abramovich Dridzo, and he came from a poor Jewish family. His father was a teacher at a *kheder*, a Jewish school, his mother kept a market stall.¹ He grew up in the neighbourhood of a railway station called Lozovaia, from which he obviously borrowed the pseudonym 'Lozovsky', which he later adopted as his true name. As a typical child of the *shtetl*, he started work when he was eight years old, first on his mother's market stall, then in a butcher's shop. At the age of 14, he was apprenticed to a blacksmith. He attended the traditional Jewish school and from a very early age he showed great enthusiasm for education.² Financial assistance from

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- 1 The biographical data on Lozovsky's early years have largely been taken from his autobiographical entry in the Granat Encyclopedia. See *Deiateli SSSR*, pp. 513–15. He himself usually wrote his name in the form A. Lozovsky during his time in the RILU, with the 'A' standing for 'Alexander'. This usage is followed here, except where the context requires something different. The form 'Solomon Lozovsky', which is frequently met with in the literature, is an awkward attempt to combine the name he was given at birth with the pseudonym he later adopted, and he appears never to have used it, as far as one can judge from the time he spent in the RILU.
 - 2 The way Lozovsky was moulded by his Jewish origin would no doubt be an interesting subject. He spent his childhood and youth in the pale of settlement. But he then broke away from that environment in several respects: he attempted to gain a higher education (which would open the way to a Russian university, at least in theory) and he joined the RSDWP (but never the *Bund*). He became active in a Jewish (and Yiddish-language) organisation after 1910 when he was abroad, but that perhaps reflected the precarious character of his situation as an exile. In the Soviet Russian context, he appeared to be completely assimilated, exclusively employing the Russian language. Moreover, until the Second World War he never made any comment on Jewish themes; in fact, he didn't even comment in general theoretical terms about the national question in the USSR. On the other hand, it was impossible for him to deny his Jewish origin. Arkady Maslow, a leader of the KPD until his expulsion from the party in 1926, who was himself of Russian-Jewish origin, recalled that in the RILU 'his assistants ... referred to him very disrespectfully and entirely accurately as "the rabbi". He has never lost the character of the typical Lithuanian ghetto rabbi, even though he speaks—always with an horrible accent—splendid Russian and French and good German' ('Losowski – Schmied, Volkskommissar, "Rebbe"' [11 July 1941], in Fischer and Maslow 1990, p. 409). Stalin's decision

his brother then made it possible for him to have a secondary education. Compulsory military service brought him to the town of Kazan' in 1899. There he passed his final examinations, and he also came into contact with revolutionary circles. He had already read some Social-Democratic literature. He was now on the way to becoming a professional revolutionary. After returning home for a short time, he went to St. Petersburg in 1903 as a student (a status which brought with it permission to reside in the city, which as a Jew he would not otherwise have received). At the end of October, he was arrested for the first time and deported back to Kazan'. There he joined the local Bolshevik faction and became a member of its local committee. During the revolution of 1905 and the subsequent struggles, he spent time in many cities of the Russian Empire, including St. Petersburg and Kharkov. He was also a delegate at the December 1905 party conference, where he came into direct contact with the Bolshevik leadership for the first time. He was arrested again in 1908 and exiled to Siberia, but he managed to escape. After a short intermediate stop in Geneva, he arrived in Paris at the beginning of 1909, where for a long time he led the life of a revolutionary refugee. 'In Paris', he recalled, 'I was the secretary of the labour exchange for Russian migrants and I directed an adult education school for electricians. I was the General Secretary of the Hatters' Union for two years. I ran a bakery co-operative for ten months and for a further few months I managed a garage. I had driving lessons in Paris and I also worked in a factory as a blacksmith and a turner'.³

After 1908, a tendency known as the Conciliators grew up within the Bolshevik faction of the RSDWP. They called for the reunification of the party, and as a result they came into conflict with Lenin, who was determined to make the split with the Mensheviks definitive.⁴ Lozovsky was one of the Conciliators, but their most important figures were Nogin and Rykov. In the summer of 1911, the exiled Conciliators established a separate group, calling themselves 'Party Bolsheviks' [*Bol'sheviki-partiitsi*]. At the

to entrust him with the political direction of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and to make him the official spokesman of the Jews of the Soviet Union certainly had nothing to do with any particular affinity Lozovsky had with the fate and the culture of Soviet Jewry. His motivation was rather that, firstly, after the purges of the 1930s Lozovsky was one of the most prominent Jews left in the party hierarchy, secondly his absolute loyalty to the party could be guaranteed (he was, according to Maslow, 'utterly unscrupulous in following changes of opinion within the party'), and thirdly he possessed the bureaucratic and organisational abilities and the international experience which were necessary for this committee, which aimed to look outwards to the Soviet Union's Western allies. His activity in this capacity was also closely connected with his other office as deputy commissar of foreign affairs.

3 *Deiateli SSSR*, p. 514.

4 On the Conciliators see Schapiro (1960, pp. 115–18, 121, 123 and 127), and Daniels (1960, 15–16 and 26–7). See also the remarks in Ossip Pjatznitzki, *Deckname Freitag. Aufzeichnungen eines Bolschewiks*, Berlin, 1984, pp. 166–72.

same time, Nogin and Rykov were arrested in Russia while working for the party. This left 'the Conciliator-Bolsheviks under such inept, second-string leaders as Lozovsky ... He soon became sick of the squabbling and weary of the effort of opposing the implacably tireless Lenin. He gave up the struggle, concerning himself entirely with activity in the French trade-union movement'.⁵

Lozovsky also became a member of the French Socialist Party, but as he indicated in his autobiographical statement, his main activities in the years before the outbreak of the First World War lay in the trade-union movement, where he was the General Secretary of the Hatters' Union, which consisted of Jewish workers. In 1911, an inter-union Jewish Commission was set up within the CGT under his direction. He edited its press organ, *Der Yidisher Arbeiter*.⁶ These activities were the reason why he became a delegate to the CGT congress of 1912, where he entered the discussion on old-age insurance, pleading for increased rights for foreign workers, who were forced by law to pay for insurance but then received nothing in return.⁷ In this way he became one of the activists of the French left. If his period in exile had lasted longer, he would perhaps have become completely integrated in the French movement. This was, after all, something which happened to a fair number of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who became involved in the Western European workers' movement (Charles Rappoport in France and Anna Kuliscioff and Angelica Balabanoff in Italy, not to mention Rosa Luxemburg in Germany).

But the outbreak of the world war, which was a turning point for Lozovsky, also put a stop to this process of integration. He himself gave a vivid description of his activities

5 Bertram D. Wolfe, *Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin. Three who made a revolution*, 1965, p. 663. The expressions 'peculiar cranks' and 'scatterbrains' were some of the more harmless invectives directed by Lenin at Lozovsky and the other leading Conciliators during this period (see Lenin, *Briefe*, vol. 2, 1967, p. 264, and also 1967, vol. 3, pp. 181 and 260). These struggles between rival cliques of exiles seem to have been a traumatic experience for Lozovsky. Alfred Rosmer reports that in 1920 he went with him to meet the French communist group in Moscow (which consisted of supporters of the Russian Revolution who had been forced to take up residence there and were unable for a variety of reasons to return home). 'When Lozovsky and I entered the meeting room, the atmosphere seemed so strained, the faces were so contorted, that it was not hard to guess that that evening the discussion had been far from cordial. Lozovsky immediately turned around, saying: "Typical émigré behaviour ... I've seen enough of that! Goodnight"' (Rosmer 1971, p. 107).

6 See Nancy L. Green, 'Éléments pour une étude du mouvement ouvrier juif à Paris au début du siècle', *Le mouvement social*, no. 110, January–March 1980, pp. 51–73, in particular pp. 63 and 66–8.

7 *XVIIIe Congrès national corporatif (XIIe de la CGT) et 5ème conférence des Bourses du Travail. Tenus au Havre du 16 au 23 septembre 1912. compte rendu sténographique*, Le Havre, n.d., p. 167. He started his short intervention by apologising for his bad French.

in the next three years in an article he wrote in 1924 for the theoretical journal of the PCF.⁸ According to this, when the war broke out, the expectation of a German attack on Paris forced him to spend six weeks in the south of the country. In Montpellier, he at first took a clandestine job picking grapes, but then at the end of September he came across a copy of a Russian newspaper which had just been established in Paris under the title *Golos*. This paper, founded on the initiative of a Menshevik, Antonov-Ovseenko, was produced under the simplest and most wretched conditions, and its name had constantly to be changed owing to repeated official prohibitions, but it became the organ of the internationalist wing of Russian Social Democracy, to the extent that this was not Bolshevik (the Bolsheviks had their own newspaper).⁹ At the same time, it was the platform for a process of political clarification which led most of its contributors towards the Bolsheviks after the February Revolution (only a minority took the Menshevik side). Names like Martov, Trotsky, Pokrovsky, Riazanov, Lunacharsky and Chicherin, to mention just a few of its editors and correspondents, are a clear indication that the intellectual élite of Russian Marxism was gathered together in the *Golos/Nashe Slovo* circle.

Lozovsky immediately joined this group, and he was closely involved in producing the paper and writing articles for it. At the same time, he was one of several people – Trotsky being the most prominent – who kept contact with the French anti-war left, including not only the socialists, but also much more significantly the revolutionary syndicalist minority in the CGT. They regularly took part in the weekly discussions in the editorial offices of the journal *La Vie ouvrière*, the most important theoretical organ of syndicalism, though its publication was suspended during the war. The Committee for the Restoration of International Relations [*Comité pour la Reprise des Relations Internationales*], which was the most important nucleus of the later French communist

8 A. Losowsky, 'Comment nous éditions pendant la guerre des journaux internationalistes', *Bulletin communiste*, nos. 41, 21 October 1924 and 42, 31 October 1924.

9 It was called *Golos* until January 1915, then *Nashe Slovo* until September 1916, and finally, for the next few months, *Nachalo*. At the beginning of 1917, it was prohibited from appearing as a daily newspaper, but the members of the editorial board who had escaped arrest were able to issue it as a weekly under the name *Novaia Epokha* for several months, until the fall of Tsarism, when the exiles were able to return to Russia. On this newspaper and the group that gathered around it, see also the autobiographical comments by Alfred Rosmer in Rosmer 1993, vol. 1, pp. 244–9, and by Charles Rappoport in *Une vie révolutionnaire 1883–1940. Les mémoires de Charles Rappoport*, Paris, 1991, pp. 316–26. Both Rosmer and Rappoport also stress the important role played by this group in the formation of a tendency opposed to the war among the French left. See also the standard works on the revolutionary left in France at this time by Annie Kriegel (1964) and Robert Wohl (1966). On the 'Russian' significance of the paper, see Michael E. Shaw, 'The Nashe Slovo group and Russian Social Democracy during World War I: The Search for Unity', PhD dissertation, University of Indiana, 1975.

movement, was formed from this group. Thanks to these activities, Lozovsky was in direct contact during the war with many of the people who would later play an outstanding role in the RILU and its French section the CGTU, such as Alfred Rosmer, Pierre Monatte and Gaston Monmousseau, to name only the most important of them.

He stood on the moderate wing of this Russo-French left group. Its most important Russian spokesman was Martov (who finally separated entirely from *Nashe Slovo*), while its chief advocate on the French side was the metalworkers' leader Merrheim. Participants in the movement, for example Rosmer, asserted emphatically that Lozovsky was a moderate in this context. Lozovsky himself, in his above-mentioned autobiographical statement and other places, does not even mention the disputes of the time, but the details are clear from other sources, such as the writings of Trotsky during the First World War.¹⁰ Anecdotal evidence of differences of opinion is provided by an incident which another French comrade-in-arms of Lozovsky, Marcel Martinet, described many years later. When the members of the *Nashe Slovo* group were preparing to go home, after a long session, they noticed that it was raining hard. Lozovsky (or more precisely Dridzo, for he was still using his original name at that time) growled:

'Damn it all! I don't have an umbrella!' The remark was neither sensational nor unacceptable, and when Trotsky replied with a solemnity which was intended to be no more than amusing: 'Comrade Dridzo, people who are scared to go out in the rain will not be capable of making a revolution', this was probably neither an accusation nor a criticism, but a humorous piece of childishness.¹¹

10 See, for example, Trotsky's August 1916 polemic against Lozovsky over his conciliatory attitude towards 'Centrism' in the French Socialist Party, printed in Léon Trotsky, *La guerre et la révolution. Le naufrage de la 11e Internationale, les débuts de la 111e Internationale*, Paris, 1974, vol. 2, pp. 154–5.

11 Marcel Martinet, 'Quelques souvenirs' [1934], in *Cahiers Léon Trotsky*, no. 12, December 1982, pp. 7–14, here p. 12. Martinet gives his own view of Lozovsky in the following words: 'He was not an individual of the top rank, and he never became one. He did however give us, some of his comrades of that time, who knew him well, a big lesson both in what the power of a revolution can make out of a person, and in the limits of what it can do. When he left us, one of the company expressed the feeling we all had: we found that he had grown a hundred feet taller, and his thinking had become richer, deeper and more decisive. At that time, the Russian revolution was gigantic, it could make the people who served it grow much bigger than they were. Afterwards, Lozovsky again became the Dridzo we knew, he again took on Dridzo's original shape'. Rosmer said something similar at the end of the 1940s: 'I had seen a lot of him in Paris; he had always been a good comrade, devoted and serious. That he was not of the greatest stature or of a steady character was to be shown by events after 1924. But in Moscow in 1920 I observed in him an air of assurance, of self-confidence, decisiveness and certainty which were new features as far as he was concerned' (Rosmer 1971, p. 59).

Trotsky was the head of the *Nashe Slovo* group, but he was deported at the end of September 1916 by the French government to the USA, via Spain. In the spring of 1917, after the outbreak of the February Revolution, he was able to return quickly from America to Russia. Lozovsky and the other Russian internationalists in Paris met with greater difficulties in returning. The French government rightly assumed that they would not be allies in the task of persuading the new 'revolutionary democracy' in Russia to continue the war at the side of the Entente, and it therefore refused to allow them to return to Russia via England and Scandinavia. There were emphatic protests from the new Russian government about this, but Lozovsky had a different method of overcoming French opposition. He knew that the French government was even less keen on seeing revolutionary 'machinations' in its own country, and so he systematically began to make propaganda for the Russian Revolution and against the war in party and trade-union meetings. 'My "harmful" propaganda allowed me to gain my escape, and the government, which preferred the lesser of two evils, decided to let me leave'.¹² He was finally able to set off in May, and after a long wait in England¹³ he travelled through Norway, Sweden and Finland, arriving in Petrograd in June, where he was able to take up a leading position in the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS) almost immediately, on the basis of his reputation as an experienced trade unionist. He rejoined the Bolshevik Party during the Third Conference of Trade Unions, which took place shortly afterwards, between 20–28 June 1917 (3–11 July, N.S.).

Little is known about his attitude in the disputes within the party during the four months between his readmission and the October Revolution. As secretary of the VTsSPS, his position was not unimportant, but he was not a member of the CC elected at the Sixth Party Congress in August, which meant that he was outside the most exclusive circle of the party's leaders. He was one of the more cautious members of the leadership, although he probably gave general support to the radical course steered by the Bolsheviks towards a seizure of power by the Soviets. He came into conflict with the party majority immediately after the October Revolution, on the issue of the concrete form the new supreme power would take. In the sharp disputes over the question of whether the Bolsheviks should form a socialist coalition government or rule alone, and in general over the first dictatorial measures taken by the new government, he lined up behind the critics of Lenin and Trotsky, a group led by Zinoviev and Kamenev, which also included his colleague in the VTsSPS leadership, Riazanov. There were

12 A. Losowsky, 'Comment nous éditions pendant la guerre des journaux internationalistes', *Bulletin communiste*, no. 42, 31 October 1924, p. 1042.

13 See Kendall 1969, pp. 171–2 on Lozovsky's stay in England, where he was in close contact with the British Socialist Party, which had itself long been connected with *Nashe Slovo* through a number of Russian exiles who worked in its ranks.

resignations from the Bolshevik CC and the new Council of People's Commissars over these issues in the first days of November. Lozovsky, who did not belong to either of these bodies, supported the opposition in a long letter to the Bolshevik fraction in the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), which was published by Gorki's newspaper *Novaia Zhizn'* on 4 November (17 November N.S.). He condemned the line taken by the majority, 'which has nothing in common with revolutionary Marxism', and he announced that he would declare this in public. He was a member of the VTsIK as a trade-union representative, along with Riazanov, and on the same day he voted in that body with the 'right' Bolsheviks and the Left Socialist Revolutionaries against the government's moves to muzzle the bourgeois press. He also took part during this time in the conversations initiated by the railway workers' trade union (the *Vikzhel*) about forming a socialist coalition government.¹⁴

What distinguished Lozovsky from the other oppositional Bolsheviks was that he did not swallow his words after a few days or weeks and again submit to party discipline. None of the others went as far as he did, by proclaiming a public fight against the Bolshevik leadership. He published two articles on the relation of the trade unions to the new Soviet government in the new trade-union organ, *Professional'nyi vestnik*, in which he rejected Lenin's views on (to use Lenin's own words) 'the duty of the trade unions ... to take over state functions and ... to carry out the socialist reorganisation of production'.¹⁵ His insistence on the independence of the trade unions, and his resistance to their integration into the new Soviet state apparatus, were to be the guiding principles of his attitude during the next couple of years.

Lozovsky's attitude can be summed up in the following way. He admitted that the Provisional Government had failed.¹⁶ The most urgent problems of the country could only be solved by working through the Soviets. But he was also of the opinion, and here he followed traditional Marxism (as embodied in the 'orthodoxy' of the Mensheviks), that Russia was not yet ripe for socialism. Therefore they should not take over the direction of the economy, but only introduce workers' control. In line with this view, he opposed the increasing number of state takeovers, such as the nationalisation of the banking sector at the end of 1917. Once again, this was a view shared by Riazanov. He would continue to take this position in the next few months, at the first all-

14 I.N. Liubimov, *Revolutsiia 1917 goda. Khronika sobitii*, vol. 6, Moscow-Leningrad, 1930, pp. 30, 46, 68, 72 and 82. There are extracts from his letter in Bunyan and Fisher 1934, pp. 204–6. See also Daniels 1960, pp. 66–7 and Schapiro 1955, pp. 76–9.

15 Lenin, *Werke, Ergänzungsband 1917–1923*, p. 18.

16 The following paragraph is based on: Liubimov 1930, vol. 6, pp. 124, 142 and 229; Bunyan and Fisher 1934, p. 313; Bunyan 1936, p. 395; Sirianni 1982, p. 97; Brüggmann 1972, pp. 123–7 (an excursus about Lozovsky's criticisms of the October Revolution); and Kaplan 1969, pp. 172, 197–202 and 219–21.

Russian congress of councils of national economy, for instance, in May 1918, where the Bolsheviks called for the whole of the economy to be placed under state control. For Lozovsky, the defence of the economic interests of the workers by independent trade unions was absolutely central. He rejected their integration into the Soviet state apparatus – the ‘governmentalisation’ advocated by the Bolsheviks. He was able to make use of his important position on the VTsSPS, where among other functions he directed the economic department set up in November, for the propagation of his views, chiefly in its central press organ. His vote in the VTsIK on 6 January (19 January, N.S.) 1918 against the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly was only logical, deriving as it did from his advocacy of a socialist coalition government.¹⁷

Directly after his letter had appeared in *Novaia Zhizn'*, Lozovsky was expelled from the party by the CC, but because ‘some comrades’ thought his attitude would not last, the expulsion was not made public, and in fact it did not take effect at that point.¹⁸ He was not definitively expelled until the end of December, on the grounds that his views contradicted those of the party and represented a petty-bourgeois denial of the dictatorship of the proletariat.¹⁹ This happened only a few days before the opening of the first Russian congress of trade unions, on 7 January (20 January N.S.) 1918.

Lozovsky remained secretary of the VTsSPS until June 1918, but he was now walled in by an overwhelming Bolshevik majority. He was also secretary of the Textile Workers’ Union from May to July of the same year, as well as being secretary of the Union of Railway Workers from June 1918 to March 1919. He was elected to the VTsSPS in January 1919 as the representative of the non-Bolshevik trade unionists. He was also elected to the trade-union leadership proper, the Presidium of the VTsSPS. From March 1919 onwards, he directed the VTsSPS Department for Organisation and Instruction, and he

17 See the extracts from the discussion in the VTsIK in Bunyan and Fisher 1934, pp. 380–4. Riazanov also voted against the measure. But since Riazanov did not go public in the extreme form adopted by Lozovsky, and since his intellectual and political stature was of a very different character to Lozovsky’s, this led Lenin and Trotsky to grant him a kind of ‘fool’s privilege’. No measures were taken to expel him from the party, although he was increasingly marginalised as far as concrete trade-union work was concerned.

18 See Lenin’s statement in his draft resolution on Lozovsky’s expulsion (Lenin, *Werke. Ergänzungsband 1917–1923*, pp. 17–18).

19 The date of Lenin’s draft resolution is given as 30 December 1917 (12 January 1918 N.S.) (ibid.). Bunyan and Fisher, who have published the resolution adopted by the CC, taking it from *Novaia Zhizn'* of 11 January (24 January N.S.) 1918 (1934, pp. 637–8), date his expulsion on the previous day. Curiously, the resolution on Lozovsky’s expulsion is not printed in the Soviet edition of the CC minutes for this period (*Protokoly Tsentral'nogo Komiteta RSDRP [b]. Avgust 1917–Fevral' 1918*, Moscow, 1958).

edited the Council's main organ, *Professional'noe dvizhenie*. In 1920, finally, he became the chairman of the Trade Union Council of the Government of Moscow.²⁰

He continued throughout 1918 to be in sharp conflict with the Bolsheviks in the trade-union movement, though he agreed with them that the trade unions should take precedence over the organs of workers' control and self-management, in other words the factory committees.²¹ He found a political home in the group of 'Social Democratic Internationalists'. This emerged at the beginning of 1918 out of the RSDWP splinter group which stood between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks and went under the name of 'United Social Democrats'. Its press outlet was the newspaper *Novaia Zhizn'*, though this was soon suppressed. In March 1918, Lozovsky became the chairman of the new group of Social Democratic Internationalists. He also edited its central organ, *Proletarii*. In May 1918, however, it split for the first time. A minority called for a *rapprochement* with the Bolsheviks and formed its own group. Then in April 1919, after various regroupings, this minority rejoined the majority group of Internationalists, still led by Lozovsky. This now took the name 'Russian Socialist Workers' Party', and had a programme of closer association with the Bolsheviks.²²

In the first weeks after the October Revolution, Lozovsky did not expect that Bolshevik rule would last very long. Once it appeared that the Bolsheviks were able to stay in power, he altered his opinions. He outlined his new position in 1919 in a pamphlet distributed by the Union of Railway Workers. He affirmed his commitment to the October Revolution, which had opened the way to the building of socialism in Russia, but he still had nothing to say about the leading role of the (Bolshevik) Party. He spoke instead of the leading role of the trade unions in the economy.²³

After this, his reconciliation with the Bolsheviks was accomplished very quickly. He had already proclaimed in greetings sent to the RCP (b) Congress in March 1919 that in the fire of revolution there were practically speaking no more differences of opinion. His party was now only interested in discussing how it could achieve unity with the Bolsheviks.²⁴ In December 1919, the fourth congress of the Russian Socialist Workers'

20 All of this information is taken from his biography in the *Biulleten' Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoiuzov*, no. 37–38, 1 August 1921.

21 See Bunyan and Fisher 1934, pp. 647–8; Bunyan 1936, p. 167; and Sirianni 1982, pp. 97–99, 127 and 156–7.

22 This party awaits its historian. Francis King has provided a sketch of its development in 'Between Bolshevism and Menshevism: the Social-Democratic Internationalists in the Russian Revolution', *Revolutionary Russia*, no. 1, 1996, pp. 1–18. We have taken further information from the data in the search guides to *fondy* 443 (material on *Proletarii*) and 444 (material on the Internationalists' CC) of the RGASPI.

23 S.A. Dridzo-Lozovsky, *Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i professional'nye soiuzy*, Moscow, 1919.

24 *Vos'moi s'ezd RKP (b). Mart 1919 goda. Protokoly*, Moscow, 1959, pp. 33–4.

Party, which now had only 422 members, voted to join them. (There were some people who opposed this decision, but they did not feel able to keep the party in existence). The Bolsheviks accepted the members of Lozovsky's party on an individual basis, and they agreed to count their earlier membership of the Bolshevik Party as valid.²⁵

25 King 1996.

Biographies of Other Leading Figures

ANTSELOVICH, Naum Markovich (1889–1953), in the revolutionary movement since 1905, after 1917 a member of the leadership of the Petrograd trade unions, chaired them between 1920–4, member of the MEB in 1922 and 1923. After 1923, he became the chairman of the Union of Agricultural Workers and a member of the VTsSPS. He was a member of the Central Council at the RILU congresses of 1928 and 1930, and a candidate of the Executive Bureau. Between 1927–34 he was a candidate of the CC.

ANDREYTCHEV, George (Georgi Andreichin) (1894–1952), Bulgarian socialist. He initially sided with the 'broad' faction, but then drew close to syndicalism under the influence of his reading of *La Vie ouvrière*. He fought in the Balkan wars, and fled to the USA in 1913, where he joined the IWW. He gained notoriety through his role in a 1916 strike in the Mesabi Iron Range of Minnesota, after which he was supposed to be deported. He was arrested in 1917. He was one of the accused in the Chicago IWW trial, but he was freed on bail during the preliminary hearings. By then he had become a communist, and he fled to Russia in 1921. He initially occupied positions of leadership in the RILU. He supported Trotsky in 1923. He then occupied various posts in the State Economic Planning Commission [*Gosplan*], the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (becoming a Soviet representative in London) and the Supreme Council of National Economy (where he worked with Trotsky). He played an important part in organising the Left Opposition. He was arrested in 1927, but later freed again. According to Serge, he gave important information to the authorities about the activities of the opposition. He was one of the few former Trotskyists who remained untouched by the purges after 1936. He worked at the Bulgarian Foreign Ministry after 1945, and he took part, among other things, in the negotiations over the peace treaty. After that he was arrested. It was rumoured that he lost his life in the USSR, although this is not certain.

ARLANDIS, Hilario (1888–1939), a leading anarcho-syndicalist in Valencia, Spain. He joined the communist party in 1920. In 1921, he was a CNT delegate at the founding congress of the RILU. He was at first elected a member of the Executive Bureau, but he had already returned to Spain by autumn 1921. He was active in the pro-communist minority of the CNT, and he then joined the Catalan federation of the Spanish communist party, which entered into opposition to Stalin's policies under the leadership of Maurín. Arlandis led the pro-Stalinist minority in 1931, and he returned to the main communist party, though he did not play a prominent role there after that. Shortly before the Spanish Civil War came to an end he was killed in an air attack.

BALDESI, Gino (1879–1934) did various jobs in his early life, became a member of the PSI and finally an editor on party newspapers. In 1918, he became assistant secretary of the CGL. In September 1920, he was involved in bringing the factory occupations to an end. A parliamentary deputy in 1921, he helped to found the reformist group which split from the PSI. In 1922–3, he supported attempts to arrive at a compromise with the Fascists. In subsequent years, he constantly wavered between opposing the Mussolini regime and making offers to it, although he himself was also a victim of the Fascist terror. In 1927, he withdrew into private life, but he kept in contact with a study group of former top CGL officials who collaborated with Fascism.

BARKER, Tom (1887–1970) was born into the family of an English farm labourer. In 1909, after spending a period in the army, he went to New Zealand, where he joined the Socialist Party and the IWW. In 1914, he moved to Sydney. He edited the local IWW organ. He was arrested in 1917 and deported to Chile in 1918. In 1920, he went from Chile to Buenos Aires. He then went to Europe as the representative of the FORA and its Seamen's Union, where he attended the ITF congress and the international syndicalist conference. He then travelled to Russia, where he was a delegate at the founding congress of the RILU. After that he worked until 1926 in the USA for the Kuzbas Project (where he was responsible for the recruitment of specialist personnel, among other things). He was then employed in London for a number of years in the Soviet oil exporting business. He was subsequently active in London on the left wing of the Labour Party and at the end of the 1950s he was mayor of St. Pancras.

BEECH, Dick (1892–1955), the delegate of the British IWW in Moscow in summer 1920, was connected with the 'ultra-left' group around Sylvia Pankhurst. In January 1921, he took part in the Leeds convention which established a unified communist party in Britain. He was active in the Minority Movement. At the beginning of the 1930s, he organised a small opposition group of trade unionists, and he was in contact with the Trotskyists. Later he was the president of the Union of Chemical Workers.

BIANCHI, Giuseppe (1888–1921), Italian printworker, started as a Republican, then became a socialist as a result of a long period of residence in Germany at the beginning of the century, where he worked for the Italian agitation organ of the General Commission of German trade unions. He was expelled from the country for insulting the German Emperor. After that he spent time in Switzerland and France. He returned to Italy in 1914 and became the editor of a number of socialist party newspapers. He was called up in 1916. After his demobilisation in 1918, he was a member of the CGL leadership and the editor of the CGL organ *Battaglie sindacali*. In 1919, he became a member of the Italian parliament. In 1920, he participated in the delegation of Italian socialists that went to Russia, but he quickly returned home, in July of that year. He was involved

in the decision to end the factory occupations in September 1920. He was elected to the CGL executive at its February 1921 congress, and in July 1921 he was one of the two CGL representatives at the first RILU congress. He became seriously ill in the autumn while he was on a study trip to Germany at the invitation of the ADGB. He died shortly after his return to Italy.

BORGHI, Armando (1882–1968), became an anarchist as a young man, spent much time in prison and exile, joined the USI, and became its leader after the war broke out, when the previous leadership went over to the camp of those who supported Italy's participation in the war. He was in Moscow between the end of July and the end of September 1920 as the representative of the USI. He returned to Italy as an opponent of membership in the RILU. In 1922, he took part in the founding of the IWMA. After 1923, he remained in exile. In 1945, he returned to Italy, and he was active in the Italian anarchist movement until the end of his life.

BOUWMAN, Engelbertus (Bertus) (1882–1955), was a Dutch docker, who became a member of the NAS in 1905 and quickly rose to a position of leadership within the union. After the formation of the communist party, he joined it and became one of the spokesmen of the communist tendency in the NAS in opposition to the anarcho-syndicalists around Lansink. He was an NAS delegate to a number of RILU meetings. In 1927, he played a leading role in the NAS's decision to break with the RILU. He was secretary of the NAS between 1933–40, and he also took an important part in the attempts led by Sneevliet to create a left socialist / Trotskyist party. After the Second World War broke out, he withdrew from political activity. He was active from time to time in the Social Democratic Party after 1945.

BRANDLER, Heinrich (1881–1967), was a bricklayer born in the Sudetenland. His travels brought him to Hamburg in 1901, where he became a member of the SPD. He spent the years between 1909 and 1914 in Switzerland. There he made the acquaintance of both Lenin and Heckert. At the beginning of 1914, he was a full-time official in the Union of Building Workers. In association with Heckert, he set up the strongest local group of the Spartacist League. In October 1919, he became a part of the KPD leadership. In February 1921, he was made one of two joint party chairmen. He was condemned to five years' fortress imprisonment for his role in the March Action, but he fled to Moscow, where he became Lozovsky's assistant in the leadership of the RILU, until he was able to return to Germany, which he did in summer 1922. He took over the party leadership again and along with Thalheimer he steered a course to the right, adopting a united front policy. In summer 1923, on the instructions of the Comintern, he oriented the KPD towards an armed uprising. After its failure he was burdened with responsibility for the defeat. He lost his majority support in the party, and he was summoned to Moscow and kept

there as a kind of exile. He worked in various Soviet institutions. At the end of 1928, he returned to Germany without Comintern permission, took over leadership of the right wing of the party, and was expelled along with the other 'rightists', with whom he then formed the KPO, or Communist Party – Opposition. In 1933, he emigrated to France, and in 1941 to Cuba. In 1949, after spending two years in London, he returned to Germany, where he led a small remnant of 'right' communists until 1956, when he withdrew from political activity.

BUOZZI, Bruno (1881–1944), was an Italian metalworker, a member of the PSI since 1905, the secretary of the metalworkers' union FIOM since 1909, and a member of the CGL leadership since 1912. He became a parliamentary deputy in 1920, and when the PSI split in 1922 he joined the reformists in the PSU. He was made secretary of the CGL in 1925 as the successor to D'Aragona. In the middle of 1926, he fled to France. There he founded an exile leadership after the CGL leaders who remained in the country had capitulated to Mussolini at the beginning of 1927 and dissolved their own organisation. Buozzi's group was recognised and supported by the IFTU as the sole leadership of the CGL, against the resistance of the communists and maximalists who had reconstituted the confederation within Italy. He was handed over to the Italians by the French authorities after the Second World War began. In 1943, he was set free, and he then joined the leading communist and Catholic trade unionists in laying the foundation for a unified trade-union confederation. He was arrested in 1944 and shot by the Germans shortly before Rome was liberated.

CEPPE, Jean (1880–?), was a CSR leader. He was the spokesman for the anarcho-syndicalist opposition in the CGTU in 1923, which was strongest in the Union of Building Workers. Nothing is known of his later life.

COLOMBINO, Emilio (1884–1933), was a metalworker, a member of the PSI after 1905 and the secretary of the metalworkers' union FIOM in Turin after 1908. He was a committed reformist. He was a member of the CGL delegation to Russia. In September 1920, he took part both in occupation of the factories and in the decision to end it. In July 1923, he was a member of a trade-union delegation that had an unsuccessful meeting with Mussolini at the latter's invitation. In January 1927, he was one of the signatories of the CGL leaders' declaration of capitulation, by which they proclaimed the confederation's official dissolution and its conversion into a study association.

COOK, Arthur James (1883–1931), started work as a coalminer in South Wales at the age of sixteen. He joined the ILP, and he was already a well-known spokesman for the syndicalist-inspired wing of the South Wales Miners' Federation before the war. In 1920–1, he was briefly a member of the communist party. He was one of the founders

of the Miners' Minority Movement in 1923. He was elected General Secretary of the Miners' Federation in 1924, and as a result also became the secretary of the International Miners' Federation in 1925, until there was a change in its statutes. He fought to achieve international trade-union unity. Despite the defeat of the British miners in 1926, which he had tried to avoid by appealing for Soviet support, his position at the head of the union remained unaffected. In 1928, together with Maxton, the leader of the ILP, he opposed the 'Mondism' propagated by the majority of the TUC. After 1929, he was an opponent of MacDonald's deflationary policies.

D'ARAGONA, Ludovico (1876–1961) joined the PSI in 1892. He became a city councillor in Milan and a local trade-union secretary in 1900. He was a spokesman for the CGL from the time of its formation in 1906. He was the editor of its press organ and in 1918 he became its secretary. He was elected deputy in 1919. He participated in the delegation to Russia and he was one of the signatories of the founding declaration of the ITUC, but he also played a decisive part in maintaining the CGL's membership of the IFTU. He was responsible in September 1920 for the abandonment of the factory occupations in Northern Italy. In October 1922, he was one of the founders of the reformist party that split from the PSI. In July 1923, he took part in a meeting with Mussolini. In January 1927, he was one of the signatories of the CGL's declaration of capitulation to Mussolini, but he did not take part in the study group that continued the CGL. In 1946, he was a socialist deputy in the Constituent Assembly. After the PSI split he was in the group that formed around Giuseppe Saragat. He repeatedly obtained ministerial office under De Gasperi. He took part in unsuccessful attempts to form a unified non-party trade union. He was a senator between 1948 and 1953.

DÍAZ RAMÍREZ, Manuel (1888–1962) was active in the workers' movement as a young man. He was one of the founders of the Mexican communist party. At the founding congress of the RILU, he belonged to the syndicalist opposition. He later wrote several books on the history of the Mexican workers' movement.

DIMITROV, Georgi (1882–1949) was a printworker by trade. He joined the Bulgarian trade-union movement in 1900, and the Social Democratic Party in 1902. After the party split, he became the leading trade-union member of the 'narrow' faction, from which the communist party emerged after 1918. He became a parliamentary deputy for the first time in 1913. He went into exile after the failed uprising of 1923 and was employed in the Comintern apparatus. He took a leading part in the founding of the RILU. He became a member of the Central Council in 1921 and of the Executive Bureau in 1924. He managed the West European Bureau of the Comintern in Berlin from the late 1920s onwards. He was arrested after the burning of the *Reichstag* in 1933 and became world famous for his role in the subsequent trial. After his release and return to the USSR, he

became the General Secretary of the Comintern and was responsible for introducing the Popular Front policy. He was involved in the liquidation of the RILU in the context of that policy, taking part during 1936–7 in the ‘Trade Union Troika’ set up by the ECCI. After 1944, he was again in Bulgaria, where he became prime minister in 1946. He died in the USSR, where he was staying for medical treatment.

DOGADOV, Aleksandr Ivanovich (1888–1937) was a metalworker in Kazan’ who joined the Bolsheviks in 1905. He was an activist in the illegal party and trade-union movement, and he was arrested and exiled abroad. In 1911, he attended the party school in Longjumeau, and in 1912 he took part in the Prague Conference of the Bolshevik faction. He was a soldier in the First World War, and in 1918 he became the chairman of the Kazan’ trade unions and a People’s Commissar in the Tatar Soviet Republic. He was elected for the first time to the Presidium of the VTsSPS in 1921. He also became its secretary. He was a member of the Central Council and the Executive Bureau of the RILU from 1922–30. He was the Soviet representative on the Anglo-Russian Committee. He was made a member of the CC and the Orgbureau of the AUCP (B) in 1924. In 1929, he renounced his ‘rightist’ views, and at the party congress of 1930 he was demoted to the level of candidate, and transferred to lower-ranking positions in the Workers’ and Peasants’ Inspectorate. He was a victim of the purges of the late 1930s.

DUGONI, Enrico (1874–1945) became a socialist when he was a student. In 1899, he became a local councillor and organiser of the Agricultural Workers’ Trade Union (*Federterra*). For a time he was influenced by revolutionary syndicalism, but at the party congress of 1910 he finally went over to the reformist position of Turati. He became a parliamentary deputy in 1913. In April 1916, he was a delegate at the Kienthal conference. The Po valley was his home ground and his political base, but it was one of the first areas conquered by Fascism. He left for Milan, and after the PSI split of 1922 he joined the reformist party, staying in the background politically after that. He was repeatedly arrested under Fascism. He died shortly after being commissioned by the CLN to refound the co-operatives.

DUMOULIN, Georges (1877–1963) was a French coalminer. He started as a Guesdist, was repeatedly dismissed for his trade-union activities, and became a syndicalist after meeting Griffuelhes and Monatte. He arrived in Paris in 1906, and in 1910 became a full-time official of the CGT. He was a delegate to the IFTU congress of 1913. After the war broke out, he opposed the *Union sacrée* and supported the Zimmerwald movement. He was elected assistant secretary of the CGT at its July 1918 congress. He sided with the CGT majority and in the conflicts which raged in the union between 1919 and the split of 1921, he was one of the most determined opponents of the revolutionary minority. After the split he withdrew from trade-union work. He joined the SFIO, and in 1924 became an

official in the International Labour Office. In 1930–1, he attempted to return to the CGT as a spokesman of the 'Committee of 22' which aimed to reunify the French trade-union movement together with the critical CGTU members around the journal *La Révolution prolétarienne*. After the reunification of the CGT and the CGTU in 1936, he again became a full-time official (as secretary for the northern region). He was a supporter of the anti-communist tendency around the journal *Syndicats*, and the leading CGT collaborator with the Vichy government. In 1944, he went into hiding and was condemned to death in his absence. In 1951, however, the judgement was reversed and his miner's pension was restored to him. He later converted to Catholicism.

EIDUS, Khaim Tevelevich (1896–1972) began as a student of medicine in St. Petersburg. He joined the Bolshevik Party in 1918, and he took part in the civil war, undertaking underground work in Vilna. Between 1921 and 1925, he studied at the Military Academy in Moscow. He was active in the RILU apparatus and also worked for the ROSTA. In 1925–6, he was the Soviet consul in Osaka. Between 1926 and 1931, he was the assistant director of the Eastern Section of the RILU. He taught at the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. After 1931, he was employed in various orientalist institutions attached to the Academy of Sciences. He published extensively on Japan and on the workers' movement in the East.¹

FIMMEN, Edo (1881–1942) started as an office employee. He was active initially in Christian organisations such as the Salvation Army. He then became involved in the socialist movement through trade-union activity. In 1905, he helped to found the trade union which represented his profession. This trade union was in turn one of the founding unions of the NVV. Fimmen became a full-time trade-union secretary in 1907. He was a co-founder of the International Secretariat of Commercial Employees in 1910, and he represented it at the IFTU congress of 1913 in Zürich as its secretary. After 1916, he was the secretary of the NVV and a delegate at the Berne conference of 1917. In April 1919, he took part in the re-establishment of the ITF and became its honorary secretary. After the congress that refounded the IFTU in summer 1919, he became the secretary of that organisation as well. At first he was a fierce opponent of the communists, but in 1923 he had to give up his position in the IFTU because of his support for a united front. After that, he concentrated on the ITF, becoming its full-time secretary. Until the change in communist policy in 1929, he continued to co-operate in communist unity initiatives. This was a subject of dissension within the ITF, but which he clearly separated from his work for the ITF. He was one of the first people to warn against the

1 See the bibliography of his writings published in *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 6, 1966, pp. 155–9, and the obituary in *Narody Azii i Afriki*, no. 6, 1972, pp. 234–6.

onset of Fascism. After 1933, he put the resources of the ITF behind the fight against Hitler. After 1938, he was forced to withdraw from active life owing to illness. He died in exile in Mexico.

FOSTER, William Z. (1881–1961) came from a family of Irish immigrants. He had various jobs in his early years. He joined the Socialist Party, then in 1909 the IWW. He travelled through Europe in the years 1910–11. He came under the influence of French syndicalism, and after his return to the USA he broke with the IWW and worked to build up a syndicalist opposition within the AFL. In 1918–19, he led campaigns to organise trade unions in the Chicago meat industry and then among the steelworkers, through the AFL. He made a journey to Russia in 1921 and joined the communist movement. In collaboration with the RILU, he created the Trade Union Educational League as a left current within the AFL. He became one of the most prominent leaders of the CPUSA and he held leading positions both in the Comintern and the RILU. In the factional struggles of the 1920s in the CPUSA, he was regarded as closely linked with Lozovsky. He was a faithful follower of the Soviet Union until the end of his life.

FRACHON, Benoît (1893–1975) was a metalworker who joined the CGT in 1909, and was at first strongly influenced by anarchist ideas. After the end of the war, he joined the SFIO. He was in favour of joining the Comintern. He was one of the founders of the CGTU, and a full-time official in that union since 1924. After 1926, he was a member of the Central Committee of the PCF, and later of the Politbureau. He was elected a candidate member of the ECCI at the Comintern congresses of 1928 and 1935. He was the secretary of the CGTU between 1933 and 1936, and after the merger with the CGT he became one of the secretaries of the unified trade-union executive. As he had been a member of the PCF leadership since the mid-1920s, he now withdrew officially from the Politbureau because this was one of the conditions of the merger, but he continued to take part unofficially in its meetings. (Not until 1945 did he again become an official member of the party leadership). After the CGT was reunified, he was the most important communist representative in the IFTU, being a delegate to its congresses and a member of its Executive Committee. After the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939, he was expelled from the CGT along with the other communists. He was one of the organisers of the communist resistance during the war, and he took part in the second reunification of the CGT. He was General Secretary of the CGT from 1945–67, and President of the union from 1967 onwards, although by then he was in very bad health.

FRAINA, Louis C. (1894–1953) was born in Italy but arrived in the USA while still a child. He was a member of the SLP until the First World War and he was also briefly a member of the IWW. During the war, he was the leader of the left wing of the Socialist Party and in

1919 the co-founder of the Communist Party (which had a rival in the shape of another communist party, the Communist Labor Party, until the two parties united in 1920–1 under pressure from the Comintern). He was a delegate to the Second Comintern Congress, but at this time he came under the suspicion that he was a police spy, though this turned out to be unjustified. He continued to work for the Comintern and for the establishment of the RILU, in Mexico among other places, but at the beginning of 1922 he withdrew from political work completely. He then constructed a new existence for himself as a social scientist, under the name Lewis Corey. He remained within the communist ambit until the mid-1930s, but then he broke with communism and became one of the leading liberal anti-communists in the USA.²

FREEMAN, Paul (1884?–1921) was an American who emigrated in 1911 to Australia. He was active there in the IWW. During and after the First World War, he was deported on several occasions, the last time to Germany in 1920. He then went to Russia with Souchy, the representative of the FAUD, and together with him he travelled through the country, also meeting Lenin.³ He represented the Australian IWW at the Second Comintern Congress. He joined the communist party and returned to Australia to organise the delegations for the Third Comintern Congress and the First RILU Congress. He took part in both congresses, and at the Third Comintern Congress he was elected a candidate member of the ECCI. On 24 July 1921, after the congress had ended, he suffered a fatal accident along with some other delegates when an experimental train crashed on a test run.⁴

GALLACHER, William (1881–1965) was an engineer by trade. He joined the Social Democratic Federation in 1906. During the First World War, he was one of the leaders of the Shop Stewards' Movement in Glasgow and the chairman of the Clyde Workers' Committee. He was criticised by Lenin in his 1920 pamphlet '“Left-Wing” Communism – An Infantile Disorder' for his 'ultra-left' views. He took part in founding the CPGB in 1920, and, as a member of the party leadership, he was given prison terms in 1921 and 1925. He was a member of the British Bureau of the ITUC and then the RILU and he was later active in the Minority Movement. In 1929, he formed part of the minority which initially rejected the 'ultra-left' turn of that year. In 1935, he was elected to parliament for

2 See the thorough biography published in 1995 by Paul M. Buhle, *A Dreamer's Paradise Lost. Louis C. Fraina/Lewis Corey, 1892–1953, and the Decline of Radicalism in the United States*. See also Draper (1957) on Fraina's role in the American communist movement.

3 See the mandate issued to both Freeman and Souchy, in SAPMO 12/708/85/15.

4 See the obituaries printed in *Der Syndikalist*, no. 33, 1921, and *The Worker*, no. 144, 27 August 1921, the latter written by Tom Barker.

the first time as MP for West Fife, a seat he retained until 1950. He was the most popular British communist, and he chaired the party after 1943. He held back from participating in the bitter disputes which shook the CPGB during the de-Stalinisation crisis of 1956.

GARDEN, Jock (John Smith) (1882–1968) was a sailmaker who lived in Australia after 1904. He was active in the trade-union movement and in socialist groups. In 1918, he became the secretary of the Labor Council of New South Wales. He was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Australia. He was a delegate to the Fourth Comintern Congress, which elected him to the ECCI, and to the second and fourth congresses of the RILU, which elected him to the Executive Bureau. He left the party in 1926, but continued to collaborate closely with the RILU, particularly in the formation of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. He broke with the RILU in 1931. He was active in the Australian Labour Party. Towards the end of his life, he was involved in a number of minor financial scandals.

GELLER, Lev N. (Leo Heller) (1875–?) was a member of Lozovsky's group of Social Democrat-Internationalists. In 1920, he headed the Propaganda Council in Tashkent and between 1922 and 1930 he was in charge of the Eastern Section of the RILU. He also spent some time in the Far Eastern Bureau of the Comintern. After 1930, he taught at the Comintern's International Lenin School. Later he fell victim to Stalin's purges.

GEORGE, Harrison (1888–196?) joined the American Socialist Party in 1910. He was expelled in 1913, and became a member of the IWW, in which he quickly rose to a leading position. He was arrested in 1917 and remained in prison until 1920. He joined the communist party in 1919, and was in prison again from 1921 to 1923. He was initially involved in fractional communist work in the IWW, then he worked for the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat of the RILU in the Far East and in San Francisco. After the latter organisation was dissolved, he edited the west coast organ of the CPUSA. His son participated as an agent of the Comintern in the failed Prestes uprising of 1936 in Brazil, and lost his life. In 1946, he was expelled from the communist party after the fall of the then party leader Browder along with a number of other veteran trade-union cadres because he called for a more strongly left-wing course.

GESCHKE, Ottomar (1882–1957) started as a railway worker. He joined the SPD in 1910 and the USPD in 1917. In January 1919, he entered the KPD. He was elected to the ZA in 1921. He belonged to the Fischer-Maslow wing of the party. He was a delegate to the RILU congresses of 1922 and 1924. In 1923, he took part in the military preparations for the communist uprising of that year. He was a member of the KPD *Zentrale* (later ZK) after 1924. At the Fifth Comintern Congress, he was made a member of the ECCI

Presidium and its secretary. At the Third RILU Congress, he was elected to the Executive Bureau. In 1926, he was a member of the Trade Union Commission set up by the ECCI. He only spent short periods in Moscow, however. When the Fischer-Maslow leadership was removed he was a strong supporter of the Soviet action. He became a member of the KPD Politbureau, but from 1929 onwards he faded into the background. He was taken to a concentration camp in 1933 where he remained until 1945. After his release he moved to the Soviet occupation zone of Germany, which later became the GDR, but only occupied positions of minor importance there.

GLEBOV-AVILOV, Nikolai Pavlovich (1887–1942) was a printworker who joined the party in 1906, was repeatedly arrested and after 1913 worked in St. Petersburg on *Pravda* and the organ of the Union of Metalworkers. He was again arrested after the war broke out. He was in Tomsk at the time of the February Revolution. From 1917 onwards, he was a leading Bolshevik trade-union functionary. From 1923–6, he chaired the trade unions of Leningrad. He was a member of the VTsSPS. He was removed from office as a supporter of Zinoviev, but he capitulated at the end of 1927, after the 15th Party Congress. After that he occupied subordinate positions in the state apparatus. A victim of the purges.

GODONNÈCHE, Victor (1886–1942) was a printworker and a revolutionary syndicalist even before the First World War. He was one of the founders of the CSRs and their provisional secretary until May 1921. He was a delegate at the founding congress of the RILU, where he voted in favour of attaching that organisation to the Comintern, unlike the majority of his delegation. After his return to France, he resigned briefly from his trade-union functions and joined the PCF. After the CGT split, he became the assistant secretary of the CGTU-affiliated Union of Printworkers. In 1925, he was part of the opposition group around Rosmer and Monatte and helped to set up *La Révolution prolétarienne*, and he continued to belong to the group around this journal in subsequent years.

GOMPERS, Samuel (1850–1924) emigrated from England to the USA at the age of 13 with his family, who were of Dutch-Jewish origin. He was a cigar-maker, and became the chairman of his trade union. After that he became president of the AFL when it was founded, remaining in that post until his death with one interruption in 1894–5. Gompers supported the concept of trade-based unions of specialised workers and rejected the principle of industrial unionism. He battled against the socialist trade unionists in the AFL and he opposed the formation of a Labour Party in the USA. His attitude towards the IFTU was ambivalent. He supported affiliation at first, and this was accomplished before the First World War, but in 1920 he forced the AFL to withdraw again. In 1918, together with the Mexican trade-union confederation (the CROM), he set up the Pan-American Federation of Labor.

GOSSIP, Alex(ander) (1862–1952) was a joiner by trade, and had been an active trade unionist since his apprenticeship. He helped to set up the ILP in 1893. Four years after the British furniture trade unions amalgamated to form the NAFTA in 1902, he became its General Secretary, a position he retained until 1940. He was a delegate to congresses of the Second International and the International Union of Woodworkers, and he belonged to the Executive Committee of the latter organisation until 1922. He was a committed opponent of the First World War but he never joined the CPGB, although he worked closely with the party in various other organisations. He was an active member of Workers' International Relief and the League against Imperialism, and he was one of the leading non-communist trade unionists in the Minority Movement. He visited the USSR for the first time in 1923. He was a delegate to the Fourth Congress of the RILU in 1928 and was elected a member of the new Central Council. At the end of 1929, his union was expelled from the International Union of Woodworkers for co-operating with the Russian trade unions. Despite the adoption of the 'Third Period' policy, he remained a fellow-traveller of the communist party and attempted to influence the TUC in this direction. He also tried to influence the Labour Party. He was not an individual member of the party but he belonged to it through his trade union. In 1940, he resigned as General Secretary of the NAFTA for reasons of ill-health.⁵

GRASSMANN, Victor (1873–1939) was a printworker. He was vice-chairman of the ADGB from 1919–33, an SPD *Reichstag* deputy between 1924–33 and he represented the ADGB on the Executive Committee of the IFTU.

GRIFFUELHES, Victor (1874–1922) was a shoemaker by trade. He was a Blanquist in the mid-1890s and took part in the political activities of this group, becoming for instance a candidate in local elections. He then turned towards revolutionary syndicalism. He was the secretary of the Shoemakers' Federation in 1900–5 and again in 1909–10. Between 1901 and 1909, he was the first General Secretary of the CGT. He was one of the authors of the Charter of Amiens. He was at first closely involved in setting up the International Secretariat of National Trade Union Centres, but he came into severe conflict with Legien at the International Secretariat over the latter's social-democratic and reformist attitudes and the CGT withdrew from the organisation. Not until Griffuelhes had been forced to resign because of (unjustified) charges of financial irregularity did the CGT return to the International Secretariat. Griffuelhes himself decided to concentrate on working out future strategy. After the war began he was

5 See Alex Gossip, 'A History of Struggle. The Furnishing Trades Union of Britain', *Labor Unity*, no. 12, January 1929, pp. 12–13, and Stanley Harrison, *Alex Gossip*, London, 1962.

somewhat inclined towards a position of defence of the fatherland, mainly because of a certain 'Germanophobia' aroused by his experiences in dealing with the prewar SPD, but he later declared his support for the Zimmerwald movement and then for the Bolsheviks. The charge brought against him after 1918 by the right wing of the CGT that he was involved in defence contracts could never be proved. Without having any direct influence on developments in the CGT, he acted behind the scenes as the *éminence grise* of the anarcho-sindicalist movement, inspiring the secret pact of February 1921. He tried to make contact with the Bolsheviks when he visited Russia in the autumn of that year, but his health was already too bad to allow him to play any further role.

GRINEVICH, Viktor Petrovich (Mikhail Grigor'evich Kogan) (1874–1942) became a social democrat in 1898, later joining the Menshevik faction. He was arrested in 1903 but succeeded in fleeing abroad. He returned to Russia in 1905 and became the most important organiser of the St. Petersburg trade-union movement. He played an important part in the attempt to call a nationwide trade-union congress. He was arrested again in 1907, fled from Russia, but returned in 1908 and published the first edition of his history of the Russian trade unions. He was in contact with the General Commission of the German trade unions. He was not particularly prominent in the subsequent period, but at the third conference of Russian trade unions in July 1917 he was elected to the position of chairman of the newly formed Central Council (VTsSPS). In the autumn of that year, however, he resigned from the position, when the majority of the trade unions came out against a coalition government. After the Bolshevik seizure of power, he was one of the spokesmen of the Menshevik trade unionists. In 1920, he took part in setting up the historical commission of the VTsSPS (known as *Istprof*). He went into exile in Germany in 1922, later moving to the USA.

HAIS, Arnošt (1893–1971) was the son of Josef Hais, one of the leaders of the KSČ. He was already active in the workers' movement before the war. He joined the Bolsheviks when he was a prisoner-of-war in Russia in 1918. After his return to what was now Czechoslovakia, he was one of the founders of the KSČ and the MVS. He was a delegate at congresses of the RILU and occasionally a member of its Executive Bureau. In 1929, he was a leading advocate of the decision of the MVS majority to break with the RILU. After his return to social democracy, he remained active as a trade unionist until 1942. After 1945, he was accused by the communists of having collaborated with the German occupation authorities. After 1948, he was in exile. He was associated with the ICFTU.

HAIS, Josef (1866–1943) was a chemical worker by trade. He joined the social democrats in 1896, becoming a trade unionist in 1898. He was one of the founders of the KSČ

and the MVS. He was a member of the KSČ Politbureau from 1924–9. He repeatedly represented the MVS at RILU congresses and in the Executive Bureau. In 1930, a year after the MVS broke with the RILU, he returned to social democracy.

HARDY, George (1884–1966) was born in Yorkshire but emigrated to North America in 1906. He joined the IWW, in which he quickly began to play an important role. He was arrested in 1917, remaining in prison until the beginning of 1919. In 1919, he was sent to Europe as a delegate to the Shop Stewards' Movement and to the ITF congress (though he was unable to attend it). After his return to the United States, he was made General Secretary of the IWW at its May 1920 convention. He advocated joining the Comintern, and he returned to Europe to attend the Berlin syndicalist conference, after which he went on to Russia. After his return in the spring of 1921, he began to organise the communist minority in the IWW. From 1922 onwards, he carried out numerous missions for the RILU. He was a member of the MEB, and of the IPC of the transport workers for work among seamen, and of the Minority Movement. He was a member of the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat between 1927 and 1929, and after that of the ISH leadership in Hamburg. After 1933 he was active in the CPGB.

HECKERT, Fritz (1884–1936) started as a bricklayer in Chemnitz. He joined the SPD in 1902. He spent the years between 1908 and 1912 in Switzerland, during which time he came into contact with the Bolsheviks. After 1912, he was a full-time trade-union official in Chemnitz. He led the Spartacus League in Chemnitz jointly with Heinrich Brandler. He became a candidate member of the KPD *Zentrale* in 1919 and a full member in 1920. He also entered the party's Politbureau. He was a minister in the Saxon 'workers' government' of 1923 and a *Reichstag* deputy from 1924 onwards. He was a delegate to the founding congress of the RILU in 1921, and later a member of its leadership (both the Central Council and the Executive Bureau) as well as of the MEB. He lived in Moscow from 1932, and died there.

HELLER – see GELLER.

HICKS, George (1879–1954) began to work as a bricklayer at the age of 11, like his father before him. He became a trade-union member in his youth, and after 1910, under the influence of syndicalist ideas, he took part in the amalgamation of the various building workers' unions. He was the General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers from 1921–40 and a member of the General Council of the TUC. He was regarded as being on the left, but after the defeat of the General Strike he took part as TUC chairman in 1926–7 in its move towards collaboration with the employers ('Mondism'). He was a member of the House of Commons between 1931 and 1950, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Works between 1940 and 1945.

IAROTSKII, Vasily (A. Chekin), was a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party before the revolution, according to the account he gave to Walter Citrine,⁶ and he took part in an attempt to assassinate a Russian general in 1907. He lived in exile in Manchester for seven years, as Jack Murphy's wife later wrote. After the October Revolution, he was imprisoned by the Petrograd *Cheka* for a short time and threatened with death. He then came to terms with the Bolsheviks. In the 1920s, he was an important member of the VTsSPS, specialising in theoretical, historical and international aspects of the trade-union movement, on which he published many works. He made international contacts on behalf of the VTsSPS, sometimes within the framework of the Anglo-Russian Committee. At the beginning of the 1930s, after the trade-union leadership around Tomskey had been removed from office, he was accused of revisionism, since he had advocated the view that the trade unions should be independent of the party.

IBAÑEZ, Jesús, was the leader of the Union of Building Workers in the town of Mieres, in the Spanish region of Asturias. He was one of the founders of the syndicalist-communist mining workers' trade union affiliated to the CNT. When the supporters of the RILU joined together in the *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios*, he became a member of their Executive Committee. He joined the communist party, though he left it again at the end of the 1920s. He was later active as a socialist and the editor of the socialist newspaper *Avance* in Oviedo. He took part in the uprising of October 1934 in Asturias. After the Spanish Civil War, he emigrated to Mexico, where he published his memoirs.

ILG, Konrad (1877–1954) became the secretary of the Swiss Metalworkers' Union in 1909. He was a social-democratic deputy in the Swiss parliament between 1918 and 1947. He was the secretary of the IMF from 1920 until his death.

IUZEFOVICH, Iosif Sigizmundovich (1890–1952) was a member of the *Bund* after 1905, and in 1917 he organised the Tanners' Union in Moscow. He was a Social Democrat-Internationalist until the end of 1919 when he joined the RCP (b). He was Lozovsky's constant colleague. He was in Germany in 1921 and 1923, in the MEB for much of the time. He represented the Russian leather-workers at the congresses of the International Federation of Leather-Workers. He was a delegate at RILU congresses, and from the beginning of the 1930s he belonged to the RILU leadership. He was RILU representative in the USA between 1931 and 1933. After the dissolution of the RILU, he was employed by the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences and he was a member of the

6 See Citrine 1964, pp. 101–2 and 109–12.

Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. He also worked for the NKVD from 1938 onwards. He was arrested in 1948 and in 1952 he was condemned to death along with Lozovsky at the secret trial mounted against the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee.

JOUHAUX, Léon (1870–1954), started his working life in a match factory. He was influenced by anarchism and revolutionary syndicalism. He became General Secretary of the CGT in 1909. He supported the policy of maintaining a political truce during the First World War, changing over to reformist positions which he had sharply attacked previously. After the end of the war, he came out in favour of the participation of the CGT in the State Economic Council, and he played an important part in the establishment of the International Labour Office. He became vice-president of the IFTU when it was re-established in 1919. He was heavily involved both in the split of the CGT in 1921 and in its reunification in 1935–6. In 1940, he was arrested by the German occupation authorities and deported. After the end of the Second World War, he led the anti-communist minority in the CGT which founded the rival trade-union confederation *Force ouvrière* in 1948 with American assistance. In 1951, he received the Nobel Peace Prize.

KALNIN, A.E. (1883–1950) joined the Latvian Social Democratic Party in 1904. He was in exile in Australia from 1912–17. During the Russian Civil War he was, among other things, Labour Commissar of the Far Eastern Republic. He was also an official of the Union of Mineworkers. He was elected to the Executive Bureau of the RILU in 1922 and 1924. He spent some time in the MEB in 1923. Later on he worked in the Soviet economic administration.

KNELLER, Michel, probably originally Moisei (he also used the name Relenk, which was clearly an anagram), was born in Ekaterinoslav in 1886. He lived in France before the First World War, and was active in syndicalist and anarchist groups there. He was one of the initiators of the secret 'pact' of February 1921. According to Godonnèche, he was chosen as a delegate to the founding congress of the RILU mainly because of his knowledge of languages (until then he had been an insignificant member of the CGT). Though he behaved at the congress as a determined anarchist and syndicalist, he appears to have made dubious offers to the Bolshevik leadership after the congress. Supporters of the 'pact' like Sirolle and Gaudeaux reacted to this by ceasing all co-operation with him and compelling his exclusion from the negotiations with the RILU leadership after the congress. After his return to France, he published a pamphlet in defence of his actions under the title *Travaux du camarade Michel Relenk au Congrès de l'I.S.R. de Moscou. Seul resté fidèle à la conception du syndicalisme révolutionnaire français et à son mandat*, but he did not take any further active part in the workers' movement.

KOZELEV, Boris Grigor'evich (1891–1937) joined the Bolsheviks in 1910, was repeatedly arrested and sent into internal exile. In 1916, he fled from Siberia to Moscow, where he took part in the revolution of 1917. He was active in the Moscow Union of Metalworkers. In 1920–1, he was the chairman of the Teachers' Union. He was a delegate to the third and fifth congresses of the Comintern. He took part in various foreign delegations as part of the international activities of the Russian trade unions. Until 1929, he was the Vice-Chairman of the Union of Metalworkers, but he was then dismissed as a rightist. In 1930, he was shunted aside to an economic management role in the Urals. He was arrested in 1936 and shot the following year.

KREBS – pseudonym of Nikolai Rakow.

KROL', Samuil Iakovlevich (1894–1937), started work in trade-union groups in 1914. He joined the Bolshevik Party at the end of the year. He was arrested and exiled in 1916. After the February Revolution, he became secretary of the Union of Bakery Workers, and after this was absorbed into a Union of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades in 1919 he became the latter's chairman. At the beginning of the 1920s, he distinguished himself as the Bolshevik trade-union leader who was most openly in favour of co-operating with non-Bolshevik trade unions. He initially rejected the centralising measures of 1921–2.⁷ He represented his trade union on the executive of the IUF between 1923 and 1927. He was one of the spokesmen of the Trotskyist opposition in the trade unions, and he was removed from his position in 1927 because of this. He was exiled to Siberia at the end of the year. He attempted to speak at the eighth congress of Russian trade unions at the end of 1928 as a member of the Central Council elected in 1926, but was shouted down. He was then arrested. In 1937, he was one of the leaders of the hunger strike by Trotskyist prisoners in the camp of Kolyma, after which all the participants were shot.

LARGO CABALLERO, Francisco (1869–1946) was a building worker by trade. He joined the UGT in 1890 and the PSOE in 1894. He quickly obtained a leading position. In 1917, he led a general strike and was condemned to life imprisonment, but then amnestied. He was opposed to joining the Comintern or the RILU. After 1923, he occasionally co-operated with the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera. After the proclamation of the Spanish republic in 1931, he became Minister of Labour in a coalition government with the Republicans. Owing to his experience of the failure of reform measures, after 1933 he became a spokesman for the left wing of the socialist party. He was given the nickname 'the Spanish Lenin'. After the outbreak of the civil war in September 1936, he became the prime minister of a popular front coalition government. In May 1937, he refused to

7 See Aves 1996, pp. 22 and 168.

agree to the communists' demand that the POUM be prohibited. He was overthrown and forced out of the leadership of the UGT in autumn 1937. He went into exile in France, but in 1940 was handed over to Nazi Germany and held in the concentration camp of Oranienburg until 1945. After the liberation he returned to France, where he soon died from the after-effects of his imprisonment.

LANSink JR., Bernardus (1884–1945) came from a old anarchist family. His father, Bernardus Lansink Sr., played an outstanding role in the early days of the NAS. In 1911, the son became the editor of the press organ of the Building Workers' Federation affiliated to the NAS, and in 1918 of the central organ of the NAS itself. He advocated a moderate syndicalist course, and was strongly influenced by anarchist and pacifist views. In 1921, he became the chairman of the NAS. He was against affiliation to the RILU, and in 1924 he took part in the split from the NAS of the supporters of the anarcho-syndicalist international the IWMA. In 1929, however, after the NAS left the RILU, he returned to his old union, though he only occupied subordinate positions there from then on. After violently disagreeing with the Sneevliet leadership in 1933–4, he broke his ties with the NAS, this time for good. In 1935, he joined the social democrats.

LEGIEEN, Carl (1861–1920), a turner by trade, became a social democrat in 1885. In 1886, he went to Hamburg and joined a trade union. He became a full-time trade-union official in 1889, and in 1890, when the General Commission of the German trade unions was set up he became its chairman. He retained that position until his death. In 1919, when the General Commission was renamed the ADGB (General German Trade Union Confederation), Legien continued to head the new organisation. He was the dominant personality in the German trade-union movement, on which he stamped his approach, as the representative of a central organisation (against the localists, the later syndicalists) and the defender of trade-based as opposed to an industry-based organisation. He also fought to defend the union's independence of the SPD, which he had represented in the *Reichstag* since 1893. He finally won that battle in 1906. He was also the secretary of the IFTU until 1914. As a convinced reformist he was one of the key figures of the political truce policy during the First World War, which led to the split in the German workers' movement. In November 1918, after the revolution, he negotiated the Central Working Agreement which governed relations between the employers and the trade unions.

LEIPART, Theodor (1867–1947), a turner by trade, was the chairman of the Union of Woodworkers from 1908–19 and the secretary of the International Union of Woodworkers from its foundation in 1904 until 1919. He stood on the right wing of the SPD. He was Minister of Labour in Württemberg in 1918–19. As Legien's successor he chaired the ADGB and was its most important representative in the IFTU, holding the position

of Vice-President between 1922 and 1933. He was responsible for the line taken by the ADGB after 30 January 1933. He was imprisoned for a short while, then released to live in retirement in Berlin. In 1946, he declared his support for the SED.

LEVAL, Gaston (1895–1978), real name Pierre Piller, was a French anarchist who fled to Spain when the war broke out. He was part of the irreconcilable opposition at the founding congress of the RILU. After his return to Spain, he opposed the affiliation of the CNT to it. In 1924, he emigrated to Argentina. In 1934, he returned to Spain and was again active in the CNT. He left for France in 1938, and there he continued to belong to the anarchist movement for the rest of his life.

MADSEN, Alfred (1888–1962) was a lithographer and the leader of the left wing of the Norwegian trade-union movement. In 1914, he became the editor of a Workers' Party newspaper, and in 1919 a member of the party executive. After 1921, he was a parliamentary deputy. He represented the Norwegian Workers' Party at the second and third congresses of the Comintern. In 1923, along with the majority of the Workers' Party, he broke with the Comintern. He was the leader of the parliamentary party between 1924 and 1931, and the Vice-President of the Trade Union Confederation between 1931 and 1934. He was a government minister in 1928 and between 1935 and 1939.

MAIER, Anton (1884–1954) was a railway official in Württemberg. He was elected in 1920 as a USPD deputy in the state Diet. He joined the KPD after the Halle Congress. In 1921, he became a member of the RILU leadership. He returned to Germany from Moscow in the autumn of that year. In November 1922, he resigned from the KPD and joined the SPD, retaining his seat in the Diet.

MANN, Tom (1856–1941) left school early to be apprenticed as a metalworker. He was a member of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE). In the 1880s, he joined the Social Democratic Federation. He was one of the leaders of the London dock strike of 1889. In 1896, he took part in the establishment of the International Transport Workers' Federation. He was in Australia between 1901 and 1910, where he came under syndicalist influence. After his return to England in 1910, he tried to set up a British syndicalist movement. He did not take part in the international syndicalist congress of 1913 because he was on a propaganda tour in the USA. In any case, he rejected the idea of creating syndicalist parallel trade unions, as did the CGT. During the First World War, he joined the British Socialist Party, which was later one of the founding organisations of the CPGB. Between 1919 and 1921, he was the secretary of the ASE. He subsequently occupied leading positions in both the RILU and the Minority Movement, but as he grew older he became less and less involved in active work.

MAURÍN, Joaquín (1896–1973) originated from a village in Aragón. He became a teacher in Lérida, where he came into contact with the CNT. In 1919, he did his military service in Madrid, where he took part in the CNT congress as a guest and met Nin for the first time. They did not become more closely acquainted until the next year, when Maurín returned to Lérida to take over the leadership of the CNT's provincial organisation and Nin visited the town as a speaker for the confederation. Maurín was one of the CNT delegates at the founding congress of the RILU in 1921. After his return to Spain, he succeeded Nin as the secretary of the CNT National Committee. He was arrested in February 1922, which meant that he had to be replaced as CNT leader. In summer 1922, after the CNT broke with the RILU, he organised the pro-RILU minority, which established the *Comités Sindicalistas Revolucionarios*. He was a delegate to the 1923 Central Council session and to the third RILU congress in 1924. He was also a member of the PCE, but in 1929 he opposed the 'ultra-left' turn of the Comintern and was expelled, along with the whole of the party's Catalan Federation. He founded the Workers' and Peasants' Bloc, which merged with the Trotskyists around Nin in 1935 to create the POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*). He was the only member of the POUM to be elected to the Spanish parliament in 1936. General Franco's *putsch* took him by surprise, and he was at that point in a part of the country controlled by the military rebels. After going into hiding and attempting to flee, he was arrested, and finally condemned to life imprisonment. He was released in 1946, however. He emigrated to the USA and achieved prominence in his journalistic activities. He was threatened with deportation from time to time during the McCarthy era, although by then his political standpoint was social-democratic and anti-communist.

MELCHER, Erich (1892–1944) was a metalworker by trade. He joined the SPD in 1910, and the Spartacus League in 1917. In 1919, he became a full-time official in the DMV. In 1921, he was expelled from that union. He then worked in the trade-union department of the KPD and in the MEB. He took part in the preparations of 1923 for the 'German October', but afterwards he was marginalised in the party as a 'Rightist'. He was in prison in 1924–5. He was expelled from the KPD in 1928. He was one of the founders of the KPO, and in 1932 he joined the SAP. After 1933, he was arrested and held in various concentration camps, including Buchenwald, where the KPD organisation refused to give him any assistance. He lost his life in 1944 while being transported from one camp to another.

MEL'NICHANSKY, Grigory Natanovich (1886–1937) started work at the age of 11 as a watchmaker's apprentice. He joined the RSDWP in 1902, was arrested many times, and spent years in underground political work. He was in the USA between 1910 and 1917, where he collaborated with the Russian socialist newspaper *Novyi mir*. He returned to Russia in May 1917 with Trotsky. After the October Revolution, he was a leading trade-union functionary. He represented the VTsSPS between 1918 and 1920 in the Council of

Workers' and Peasants' Defence (later Council of Labour and Defence). He chaired the Moscow trade unions between 1918 and 1924. He was a member of the Presidium of the VTsSPS between 1922 and 1928, and he was a member of the Executive Bureau of the RILU between 1922 and 1930. In 1924, he was elected to the newly formed Commission for Foreign Relations at the VTsSPS. He was an important figure in the Anglo-Russian Committee. He chaired the Union of Textile Workers between 1926 and 1929. He was a candidate member of the AUCP Central Committee between 1925 and 1930. He was transferred to lower-ranking positions in the state apparatus after 1928 as a 'Rightist'. He fell victim to the purges.

MILKIČ, Ilija (1882–1968) was an office employee who was one of the founders of the trade union that represented his own branch of employment. He also helped to found the Serbian Trade Union Confederation and Serbian Social Democracy in 1903. He was elected to the Belgrade City Council in 1910. He spent the First World War in exile. In 1918, he was employed by the Soviet mission in Switzerland. He went to Russia at the beginning of 1919. He went in Vienna in 1922 to join the Secretariat of the Communist Balkan Federation. He was involved in unclear financial operations using Comintern funds. He returned to Belgrade in 1926 and withdrew from political activity.

MONATTE, Pierre (1881–1960), was a proofreader and an anarchist. He became a member of the CGT leadership in 1904. In 1907, he attended the international anarchist congress in Amsterdam, at which he called for anarchists to work within the trade unions. In 1909, he was one of the founders of the journal *La Vie ouvrière*, which was the organ of the revolutionary syndicalist current in the CGT. He resigned from the CGT leadership when the war broke out in protest against the patriotic position taken by its majority. After the October Revolution, he was one of the most prominent supporters of co-operating with the Bolsheviks despite his reservations about their subordination of the trade unions to the party and despite his criticism that they were simply socialists in another form. He was a spokesman for the element in the CGT which supported affiliation with the RILU. He joined the PCF in 1923, but he was expelled in autumn 1924, together with Rosmer, under the banner of 'Bolshevisation', for his criticisms of the new party leadership and his support for Trotsky. He founded the journal *La Révolution prolétarienne*, which advocated revolutionary syndicalism, and on which he had a decisive influence until his death.

MONMOUSSEAU, Gaston (1883–1960), was a railway worker who started as an anarchist and was one of the spokesmen of the opponents of the war in the CGT and later in the CSRS. At the end of 1921, he took over the editorship of *La Vie ouvrière* from Monatte. He was the General Secretary of the CGTU from the Saint-Étienne congress of June 1922 until 1932. He delivered the report at the Second RILU Congress on the alteration of

the RILU statutes demanded by the CGTU. He was a member of the Executive Bureau until the dissolution of the RILU, though he only occasionally took part in its work. In 1933, he took over the direction of the European Secretariat of the RILU, which had been transferred to Paris. He joined the PCF in 1925 and was elected to the party's Politbureau in 1926. When the CGT was reunified in 1936 he was not elected to its executive. He was a parliamentary deputy between 1936 and 1940. He was one of the leaders of the communist trade unions during the French resistance. After 1945, he was in the Secretariat of the CGT and the leadership of the PCF. In 1949, he became a member of the WFTU executive.

MÜLLER, Richard (1880–1943) was a metalworker and a social democrat, and since 1915 the head of the turners' section of the Berlin DMV and one of the leaders of the opposition within that trade union. He was one of the most important organisers of the movement of the Revolutionary Shop Stewards, and took a leading part in the Workers' Council movement in the November 1918 revolution. In 1919, he was part of the new DMV leadership influenced by the USPD. He was the editor of the DMV's press organ until the USPD broke apart in 1920. He was one of the most important trade unionists in the KPD in its earlier years, but he left the party after the Friesland crisis. He did not join any other party. In 1924–5, he published his three-volume history of the German revolution, which is still an important source, with the Neue Deutscher Verlag, a firm with KPD connections. After this he seems to have been associated, at least occasionally, with the *Deutscher Industrieverband* (DIV), the organisation which emerged from the decaying remnants of the various independent 'unionist' groups.⁸

MURPHY, John T. (Jack) (1888–1966) was one of the leaders of the Shop Stewards' Movement during the First World War. He joined the 'De Leonist' Socialist Labour Party in 1917. In 1920, he was the delegate of the Shop Stewards' Movement at the Second Comintern Congress. He took part in the creation of the International Trade Union Council (ITUC), and he set up its British Bureau. He was a leading member of the CPGB, which he represented at Comintern congresses and in the ECCI. He was forced into the background when the ultra-left course began in 1929, and expelled from the party in 1932. After that, he was active in the Labour Party (on the left wing of the Socialist League). He later withdrew from politics.

NEDIALKOV-SHABLIN, Ivan (I.N. Ianchev) (1891–1925) was a telegrapher, who joined the socialist movement in 1897. He rose to be a top official in the post office and took part in the Bulgarian delegation at Brest-Litovsk in 1918 in that capacity. As a member

8 See Koch-Baumgarten 1986, pp. 435, 438 and 442, and Langels 1989, p. 59.

of the 'narrow' socialists, he belonged to the Bulgarian Communist Party when it was founded in 1919. He was a member of its CC and he was sent to Moscow in 1920. He returned to Bulgaria in 1921. After the failure of the 1923 rising, he engaged in illegal work. He was captured by the police and burned alive.

NIN I PÉREZ, Andreu (1892–1937) was an elementary school teacher, born in Catalonia. He started his political career in left nationalist groups, and then he entered the Catalan Socialist Federation, which he left in 1919 to join the CNT. He was the secretary of the CNT National Committee in 1920–1. He was a delegate to the founding congress of the RILU, but he was arrested in Berlin while on his way back to Spain and then deported to Russia, after the Spanish government had demanded his extradition for allegedly organising a plot to assassinate the Spanish prime minister. He was Lozovsky's deputy in the RILU from 1922–8. He was sent on many missions abroad. Expelled from the party as a supporter of Trotsky he was able to return to Spain in 1930, where he became the spokesman of the Spanish Trotskyists. After merging his group with the adherents of Maurín to form the POUM (a decision criticised by Trotsky), he was its leader during the civil war. He was arrested by the Soviet secret police in June 1937 together with the rest of the POUM leadership. Despite being tortured, he refused to 'confess' in a show trial, and he was murdered on Stalin's instructions by Orlov, the NKVD representative in Spain, before an international solidarity campaign was able to free him.

NOGIN, Viktor Pavlovich (1878–1924) was a member of social-democratic circles in the 1890s. He was a supporter of *Iskra*, a Bolshevik, a member of the RSDWP CC in 1907, and then a leading Conciliator. After the February Revolution, he returned to the Bolshevik Party. He was made a member of the CC, and he was the chairman of the Moscow Soviet during the October Revolution. He was made People's Commissar for Industry in the first Soviet government, but he supported the idea of a socialist coalition government and soon resigned his position. In 1918, he was made assistant Labour Commissar. He was elected to the RILU leadership in 1921, but in the autumn of that year he was sent on a mission to Turkestan. From 1922, he was in charge of the Textile Industry Syndicate.

OUDEGEEST, Jan (1870–1951) played a very important part in the Dutch Union of Railway Workers. He became its first chairman in 1898. When the NVV was reformed in 1905, he was first its secretary and then, from 1909–19, its chairman. During the First World War, he set up a branch office of the IFTU in neutral Amsterdam, on Legien's instructions, so as to ensure that contact was maintained with the national trade-union centres of the Entente powers. He was the secretary of the IFTU from 1919–27. He withdrew from international trade-union work after coming into conflict with the TUC over the IFTU's policies, particularly towards the Russians. He had been a member

of the Dutch social democratic party (SDAP) since 1896, and for many years he sat in both local councils and national parliaments. He was elected chairman of the SDAP in 1927, a position he retained until 1934.

PESTAÑA NÚÑEZ, Ángel (1886–1937) came from a poor family in León and he already had to work as a child. This took him to France and Algeria, where he finally became a watchmaker. He was already in contact with the anarchists of Barcelona, and he travelled to that city in 1914. There he took part in the attempts being made to resuscitate the CNT. He was a delegate at the anarchist congress in El Ferrol in 1915. By 1916 he was already in charge of the Catalan regional committee of the CNT. In 1917, he took part in negotiations with the UGT for a general strike. He edited the CNT organ *Solidaridad Obrera* in 1918–19. His role as one of the leading Spanish anarcho-syndicalists was confirmed at the 1918 congress of the Catalan regional organisation of the CNT in Sants, and the CNT congress of 1919. In 1920, he was a delegate of the CNT to Moscow, and one of the founders of the ITUC. After his return to Spain, he was imprisoned. While in prison he wrote two critical reports which played a decisive role in the withdrawal of the CNT from the RILU in 1922. Pestaña was a declared opponent of anarchist terrorism, and he finally evolved towards a moderate kind of syndicalism. In 1932, he was expelled from the CNT, together with the whole of the moderate opposition current, by the radical anarchist leadership of the union. In 1934, he founded a syndicalist party, and in the 1936 elections he was elected as a Popular Front deputy on behalf of this party. After the civil war broke out, he was appointed to important government positions, which he retained until his death. He was readmitted to the CNT in March 1937.

PURCELL, Albert Arthur (1872–1935), like his father, was a French polisher by trade. He was an active trade unionist from 1890 onwards. He was made General Secretary of the French Polishers' Union in 1898 and from 1910 he was an official of the NAFTA. He had dual membership of the BSP and the ILP. He came under syndicalist influence at this time. He opposed the First World War and in 1919 was one of the spokesmen of the 'Hands Off Russia' movement. In the same year he became a member of the TUC Parliamentary Committee (renamed TUC General Council in 1921) and he continued to be a member until 1927. He was the president of the TUC in 1924–5. He took part in the formation of the CPGB, but he left the party in April 1922 after a disagreement with his local party group in Salford. He was regarded as the spokesman of the Left in the TUC leadership and he called for an agreement to be reached with the Russian trade unions. In 1924, he was a member of a TUC delegation to Russia. He was president of the IFTU from 1924–7, and in that capacity he continued to call for the admission of the Russian trade unions, against fierce resistance from most of the other European trade-union leaders. He represented the TUC between 1925 and 1927 in the USA, Mexico and

India. He was a member of parliament between 1923 and 1924, and between 1925 and 1929. After that he withdrew into local trade-union work as secretary of the Salford and Manchester Trades Council, continuing in this role until his death. Daniel Calhoun has characterised him in the following way: 'a strong, powerful person, often extreme in advocating his opinions and too openly scornful of those who refused to accept them. He lacked any kind of tact, finesse or diplomacy. Few people could come close to him, but many took their inspiration from him'.⁹

RAKOW, Nikolai (pseudonym: Krebs) (1890–?) was a Russian of German ethnicity, who served as a Bolshevik emissary to Germany in 1919. He was a KPD official in Berlin, and worked in the MEB from 1921–3. After that he worked in various undercover agencies, including the foreign department of the GPU. Like his brothers Paul and Werner (alias Felix Wolff), who were also active in the communist movement, he was a victim of the purges. The date of his death is unknown.¹⁰

REINSTEIN, Boris Isaevich (1866–1947) was born in the city of Rostov. He joined the revolutionary movement in 1884. In 1886, he went to Paris, before moving to the USA in 1901, where he joined the SLP. He was one of its delegates to the Stuttgart congress of the Second International in 1907. In 1917, he was sent by the SLP to Stockholm to take part in the planned international socialist conference. From there he returned to Russia. At the beginning of 1918, after spending a short time as a member of the Menshevik-Internationalists, he decided to join the Bolsheviks. He was initially made responsible for international propaganda in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, and he took part among other things in making preparations for the foundation of the Comintern.¹¹ He was then active in the apparatus of the Comintern and the RILU. He represented the RILU in the USA in 1922. Later he was the director of the Comintern Archive.

RIEGER, Otto (1879–?) was a marine engineer. He joined a syndicalist organisation before the First World War. In 1919, he was the leader of the union that preceded the *Schiffahrtsbund*. In 1920, he was working in Stettin (Szczecin) for the German-Russian Transport Society, and he also had close political contact with the Russians, which repeatedly provided the FAUD organ with reasons to make polemical attacks on him.

⁹ Calhoun 1976, p. 38.

¹⁰ Markus Wehner, 'Kaderkarrieren der Weltrevolution: Die deutsch-russische Geschichte der Brüder Rakow', *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, no. 1, March 1994, pp. 29–67, here pp. 50–1.

¹¹ See his report: 'Auf dem Wege zum 1. Kongreß der Komintern', *Kommunistische Internationale*, nos. 9–11, 13 March 1929, pp. 665–75.

He opposed the RILU leadership both as a delegate to the founding congress of that organisation and at the international seamen's conference which took place shortly afterwards. When the *Schiffahrtsbund* joined the RILU in spite of this, he left it, setting up instead an international seamen's union with its headquarters in Stettin (Szczecin), which had links with both the FAUD and the IWW. All trace of his later life has been lost.

ROSMER, Alfred (original name: Griot) (1877–1964) came to anarchism via literature, and he took his pseudonym from the hero of a play by Ibsen. He joined the group around *La Vie ouvrière* and he got to know Trotsky during the First World War, forming a lifelong friendship with him. He went to Moscow in 1920 as a representative of the French left. Here he was elected to leading positions in the Comintern and the newly formed International Trade Union Council. He divided his time between France and Russia until 1924. He was one of the leaders of the PCF in 1923 and 1924, but in the autumn of 1924 he was expelled, together with Monatte, for his criticisms of the process of Bolshevisation and the campaign against Trotsky. He was one of the founders of the journal *La Révolution prolétarienne*, and in 1929 he was the only person from this group to take part in the creation of the Trotskyist organisation, though he left it in 1931 because of tactical disagreements (over *Opposition unitaire* among other things). In 1939, he visited Trotsky in Mexico. He was not able to return to France from exile in the USA until 1947. He published, among other works, an autobiographical account of his period in Moscow and a two-volume history of the French anti-war left during the First World War.

ROZOVSKY, Solomon Zakharovich (1879–1924) joined the party in 1901. After the October Revolution, he worked first in the People's Commissariat of Supply and then in the central administration of the co-operative movement (*Tsentrosoiuz*). In 1921, he was made secretary of the ITUC. Because of his heart problems, Lenin arranged for him to be sent abroad on business. He was the Berlin representative of *Tsentrosoiuz* in 1922 and in 1923–4 he worked in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade.

RUDZUTAK, Ian Ernestovich (1887–1938) became a Bolshevik in 1905. After 1917, he was one of the leaders of the trade unions. In May 1921, he was transferred along with Tomsky to Turkestan as a punishment for failure to resist a motion in favour of proletarian democracy in the unions. He was a member of the Central Committee from 1920 onwards, a candidate member of the Politbureau in 1923–4 and from 1934–7, and a member of the Politbureau from 1926–32. He lost his life in the purges.

SASSENBAACH, Johannes (1866–1940), was a saddler by trade. He led the Union of Saddlers from 1891 until 1906 and the International Federation of Saddlers' Unions

from 1906 until 1921. He also engaged in cultural activities, involving the education of trade unionists, and he founded some of the most important collections on trade-union history. He was emphatically reformist in outlook. Between 1902 and 1923, he was first a member of the General Commission and then the ADGB federal executive. He and Legien were the German representatives at international trade-union conferences after 1903. In 1915, he became the first social-democratic town councillor in Prussia. He was the secretary of the IFTU from 1922–31.

SERGEEV-ARTEM, Fedor Andreevich (1883–1921) joined the party in 1901. He was a member of the Bolshevik faction. In 1910, he fled from Siberia to Australia. He returned to Russia in 1917. During the civil war, he was mainly active in Ukraine. He was a member of the RCP (b) CC in 1920 and 1921. He became chairman of the Union of Mineworkers in 1921. He died in a fatal accident that year along with a number of delegates to the founding congress of the RILU.

SEVERIN, Frans (1889–1972) had a variety of jobs in his youth. He was a social democrat for a short period and then became a syndicalist. After 1917, he worked as a journalist for the organ of the SAC. In 1928, he returned to social democracy. He was a member of the Swedish parliament from 1933 to 1956, and also held government office from time to time.

SHAPIRO, Aleksandr (Alexander Schapiro) (1883–1946) was a Russian-Jewish anarcho-syndicalist who came to London in 1901. In 1907, he took part in the anarchist conference held in Amsterdam. There he was elected to the international anarchist bureau. He returned to Russia in 1917. He was active in the anarcho-syndicalist group around the newspaper *Golos Truda*. After the October Revolution, he was employed in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. He left Russia in 1922. He settled in Germany and became one of the three secretaries of the IWMA when it was formed. He later lived in exile in the USA.

SHMIDT, Vasily Vladimirovich (1886–1940) worked in his youth on the railways and as a turner. He became a Bolshevik in 1905 and fled to Germany after the failure of the revolution. He returned to Russia in 1912 and took part in the revival of the Union of Metalworkers in St. Petersburg. He was repeatedly arrested after 1914. In 1917, he became the secretary of the Bolshevik Party Committee in Petrograd, and the Petrograd Council of Trade Unions. Between 1918 and 1928 he was a member of the Presidium of the VTsSPS. From November 1918 until 1928, he was People's Commissar for Labour in the RSFSR then the USSR. Throughout the period between 1918 and 1934, he was either a candidate or a member of the CC, with one short interruption. Between 1929 and 1931, he was Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. From

1931–3 he was a member of the Council of Labour and Defence. In 1933, his name was mentioned in connection with the opposition group around Eismont. He was a victim of the purges.

SIMON, Josef (1865–1949) chaired the Central Association of Shoemakers from 1900 to 1933. He was a deputy in the German *Reichstag* from 1912–33. He was one of the founders of the USPD in 1917. In 1907, he became the secretary of the newly founded International Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers, which merged with the saddlers in 1921 to become the International Federation of Boot and Shoe Operatives and Leather Workers (IFBSOLW). He was the international secretary of this organisation until 1933. He was persecuted and put in a concentration camp during the Nazi period. After 1945, he took part in the reconstruction of the trade unions.¹²

SIROLLE, Henri (1885–1962) was a railway worker who became an anarchist. He led the CGT minority. He was one of the signatories of the ‘secret pact’ of the ‘pure syndicalists’ in February 1921, but despite this he argued that they should remain in the RILU. After the supporters of the IWMA split from the CGTU, he joined the CGT-SR for a short time. By 1927, however, he was already active again in the CGT-affiliated Federation of Railway Workers. Later in his career he became an official of the state railway administration.

SNEEVLIET, Hendricus (Henk) (1883–1942) originally worked on the railways. He was active in the Dutch workers’ movement from 1900 onwards. In 1913, he went to Indonesia (known as the Netherlands Indies at that time), where he founded the local workers’ movement. In 1918, he was deported back to the Netherlands by the colonial authorities. He then joined the NAS and the Dutch communist party. In 1920, he went to Moscow. He was sent by the Comintern to China (under the pseudonym of Maring), where he helped to form the alliance between the communists and the Guomindang. He returned to the Netherlands in 1924, taking over the leadership of the NAS. He was a supporter of Trotsky. In 1927, he led the NAS in its break with the Comintern and the RILU. He founded several left socialist parties based around the NAS, sometimes in close collaboration with Trotsky. After the German occupation of the Netherlands, he set up a resistance organisation. He was arrested and shot by the German authorities.

SOUCHY, Augustin (1892–1984) became an anarchist in 1911. He was in Sweden during the First World War, joining the syndicalists there. In 1919, he returned to Germany. He and Rudolf Rocker were the two leading figures in the FAUD, on behalf of which group

12 See Adolf Mirkes (ed.), *Josef Simon. Schuhmacher, Gewerkschafter, Sozialist mit Ecken und Kanten*, Cologne, 1985.

he went to Russia in the summer of 1920.¹³ In 1922, he became the secretary of the IWMA. In 1933, he fled to France. Between 1936 and 1939, he was active in Spain on behalf of the CNT. After the end of the civil war, he went first to France and then to Mexico. He returned to Europe in 1950, subsequently undertaking international missions as an educational expert for the ICFTU and the ILO. He published his memoirs in 1977.

STENHUIS, Roelof (1885–1963) came from a social-democratic family. He joined the workers' movement at the beginning of the century. After the Dutch Association of Factory Workers (which organised unskilled workers) was set up in 1907, he became its full-time secretary. Between 1919 and 1928, he was the chairman of the Dutch trade-union confederation, the NVV. He was on the left wing of Dutch social democracy. He was a parliamentary deputy between 1924 and 1938. He was the secretary of the International Federation of General Factory Workers between 1920 and 1927. After 1928, he temporarily worked in co-operation with Sneevliet. He joined the communist party for a short period in 1936. During the Second World War, Stenhuis collaborated for some time with the German occupation authorities as an official of the trade unions, which were now government-controlled.

TANNER, Jack (1889–1965) was a metalworker active in the syndicalist movement before the First World War. He was one of the chairmen of the international syndicalist conference held in 1913 in London. He worked in Paris in 1915–16, and while there he was in close contact with the group around *La Vie ouvrière*. After his return to Britain, he entered the Shop Stewards' Movement. He went to Moscow in 1920 as its delegate and he was also a delegate to the IWW conference in 1921. He never joined the communist party, but as a member of the most important metalworkers' trade union, the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), he was a leading activist in the Minority Movement. At the beginning of the 1930s, he entered into contact with the Trotskyist opposition group organised by Dick Beech. In the mid-1930s, he moved away from the communist party and became a top AEU official. He was president of the AEU between 1939 and 1954, and after the Second World War he represented the union in the IMF and on numerous missions abroad. He chaired the TUC in 1953–4. By then he had gained the reputation of being an extreme anti-communist.

THOMAS, James Henry (1874–1950) started as a railway worker. He helped to set up the National Union of Railwaymen, of which he was General Secretary from 1917 to 1931.

13 His report on this trip was published in Berlin in 1921 under the title *Wie lebt der Arbeiter und Bauer in Russland und in der Ukraine? Resultat einer Studienreise von April bis Oktober 1920*.

He was a member of the TUC Parliamentary Committee (later renamed the General Council) from 1917–24 and from 1925–9. He was the president of the IFTU between 1920 and 1923. He was a member of the House of Commons between 1910 and 1935, and he was a minister in the Labour governments of 1924 and 1929–31, and in the coalition governments of MacDonald and Baldwin from 1931–6.

TILLET, Ben(jamin) (1860–1943) grew up in poverty-stricken circumstances and received almost no regular schooling. He was a seaman in his youth, but later became a docker. He was self-taught but extremely knowledgeable. He was strongly influenced by Christian ideas, and became a Congregationalist lay preacher. In 1887, he took part in organising a trade union for warehousemen. He was one of the three people who led the famous London dock strike of 1889. As the leader of the Dockers' Union, he was involved later on in the series of amalgamations which led in 1922 to the creation of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), where he was soon to be overshadowed by Ernest Bevin. From the 1890s onwards, he was an active member of the Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party. Before the First World War, he was influenced by syndicalist ideas, but after it broke out he stood on the patriotic right of the British labour movement. In 1920 and 1924, he took part in British delegations to Soviet Russia. He was a member of the House of Commons between 1917 and 1924 and between 1929 and 1931. He was also a member of the TUC General Council from 1921 until he was compelled in 1931 to give up his trade-union functions for reasons of age.

TOMMASI, Joseph (1886–1926) was a metalworker who became a member of the French socialist party in 1904. During the First World War, he was factory shop steward. A member of the opposition within his union, he became secretary of the Association of Trade Unions of the Seine Department, but was forced to resign because of his attitude at the founding congress of the RILU. He was a member of the PCF leadership from 1921 onwards. In 1924, he endeavoured to avoid being caught up in the expulsion of Trotsky's supporter Souvarine and the revolutionary syndicalists from the party. He was forced to flee to Moscow in the same year, as he had begun setting up the first Soviet spy network in the French armaments factories. In Moscow, he represented the CGTU at the RILU, and had the reputation of being an oppositionist; he lived with one of Trotsky's relatives. He died suddenly in May 1926. Trotsky spoke at his funeral.

TOMSKY, Mikhail Pavlovich (Efremov) (1880–1936) was a lithographer and also a metalworker for some time. He became a social democrat in 1904, and in 1906, after his first arrest and exile, a trade-union organiser in St. Petersburg. He was one of the most important underground Bolshevik activists, repeatedly arrested and exiled. In 1917, he travelled from his Siberian place of exile first to Petrograd and then to Moscow. He was the most important Bolshevik trade-union leader, and the chairman of the VTsSPS

between 1918 and 1929. He played a leading role in the foundation of the ITUC in the summer of 1920. He took an 'anti-party' position during the approach to the fourth congress of Russian trade unions in 1921, and was punished by losing his major functions for a short period, between May 1921 and the beginning of 1922. He was a member of the CC from 1919, and a member of the Politbureau from April 1922. Along with Rykov and Bukharin, he led the 'right-wing' faction of the party, which was removed from power by Stalin in 1929. He then lost his trade-union position and his membership of the Politbureau, but he remained in the CC (although from 1934 he was a candidate rather than a full member). He was arrested in summer 1936 at the beginning of the purges, and committed suicide in order to avoid being tortured into making a confession.

TRESSO, Piero (1893–1943) joined the socialist youth movement in 1907. He organised peasant leagues before the First World War. During the war he was called up, and spent some time in a punishment battalion on account of his anti-war activities. He was a founder member of the PCI. At first he was influenced by Bordiga, but he later supported Gramsci in the party's factional disputes. He was one of the organisers of the party's trade-union work. After 1926, he spent some time in illegal activities in Italy, then emigrated to France. He was a delegate to the congresses of the RILU and was elected to the Executive Bureau on several occasions. In 1930, he was one of the three oppositionists in the party leadership who supported the Trotskyist opposition, and he was active in France in this direction in the 1930s. He was arrested in Vichy France by the Gestapo in 1942 for his activities for the Fourth International. In 1943, he and a fairly large group of other prisoners escaped and joined the French underground. He was then murdered by the Stalinist apparatus along with other Trotskyists. This fact was denied for decades by the PCF and the PCI. Not until 1997 did the chair of the PCF, Hue, admit that the party had taken part in this murder, although the concrete circumstances of the involvement of the French and Italian party leaderships have not yet been clarified to this day.¹⁴

TSYPEROVICH, Grigory Vladimirovich (1871–1932), was a Russian economist who had been active in the revolutionary movement since 1888. He was arrested in 1894 and condemned to ten years of exile. After 1907, he was active in the trade-union movement in St. Petersburg. He was re-arrested in 1911, after which he went into exile abroad. After 1917 he again took part in the trade-union movement. He joined the communist party in 1919. In summer 1920, he took part in the preparatory discussions which led to the

14 See Pierre Broué and Raymond Vacheron, *Meurtres au maquis*, Paris, 1997, and Paolo Casciola and Giorgio Sermani, *Vita di Blasco. Pietro Tresso dirigente del movimento operaio internazionale [Magré di Schio 1893–Haute-Loire 1944?]*, Magré, 1985.

establishment of the International Trade Union Council (ITUC). He participated in the founding congress of the RILU and was elected a member of its first Central Council. Later he was active in the economic and government administration of the city of Leningrad.

VOLAN, Elias (1887–1974) started as a building worker. He became a trade unionist in 1905, and belonged to the leftist opposition in the Norwegian trade unions during the First World War. He was the chairman of the Union of Building Workers from 1918–27, and a member of the executive of the Norwegian Communist Party between 1923 and 1927. In 1929, he broke with the communists and returned to the Workers' Party. He was a member of the secretariat of the Norwegian Trade Union Confederation from 1931–4 and 1938–53.

WALCHER, Jacob (1887–1960) was a metalworker by trade. He joined the DMV and the SPD in his youth. He edited the SPD party organ in Stuttgart between 1911 and 1914. He was in the Spartacus League from 1914 onwards. He joined the KPD as soon as it was established. He was a member of the KPD *Zentrale* from 1920–4, and frequently represented the KPD at Comintern and RILU deliberations in Moscow. After the 'German October' he was demoted as a 'Rightist'. He joined the KPO in 1928, and he belonged to the minority of that organisation which merged with the SAP in 1932. When he went into exile, he became the secretary of the SAP's foreign leadership. He negotiated with Trotsky in the autumn and winter of 1933 about the formation of the Fourth International, but then went over to taking an anti-Trotskyist course and supporting the Popular Front policy. He was in exile in the USA from 1941 onwards. During this time he again moved closer to the KPD. He returned from America to East Germany in 1947, where he took over the editorship of the FDGB newspaper. At the beginning of the 1950s, as a former 'enemy of the party', he was dismissed from all political functions. He was in close contact with Brecht, but he continued to be kept in the background officially even after 1956, as a 'party veteran'.

WALTER, Albert (1885–19??) went to sea as a young man. He joined the USPD in 1919, then the KPD. He was active after 1922 in the transport workers' IPC, and when the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers (ISH) was founded in 1930 he became its leader. After a period of imprisonment in 1933–4, he began to work for the National Socialists. Between 1949 and 1953 he was a member of the West German parliament for the right-wing *Deutsche Partei*.

WILLIAMS, Robert (1881–1936) was the son of a harbour-worker, and he worked at first as a cargo-trimmer on the docks. He joined a trade union in Cardiff. In 1912, he became the secretary of the National Transport Workers' Federation, which had been set up

the year before, and in 1914 he was one of the founders of the Triple Alliance of the miners, the transport workers and the railway workers. He was also a member of the British Socialist Party. Between 1918 and 1921 he was on the Labour Party Executive. He was decisively involved in the transformation of the TUC Parliamentary Committee into the General Council in 1920 and in bringing to an end the GFTU's role as British representative on the IFTU. He played a leading part in the amalgamation of numerous socialist organisations to form the CPGB, but he was expelled from that party in April 1921 because he was held responsible for the failure of the Triple Alliance to act in support of a miners' strike, which led, it was said, to its defeat. He was president of the ITF from 1920 to 1925. When the TGWU was set up at the beginning of 1922, he was pushed out as leader of the British transport workers by Ernest Bevin. He had a second spell on the executive of the Labour Party between 1922 and 1926 and he was its president in 1925–6. He then withdrew from politics into journalism, becoming the managing director of the *Daily Herald*.

ZIESE, Max (1882–?) was a member of the plumbing section of the Berlin DMV. In December 1920, he was the candidate for treasurer on the list submitted by Oskar Rusch for the local leadership of the Berlin DMV. He was the secretary of the MEB. He did not occupy an official leading position in the RILU until its fifth congress in 1930, when he was elected onto the Central Council. From then on he was apparently employed by the RILU at its headquarters in Moscow. Paul Merker, who was a member of the KPD leadership at the time, mentions him in a letter of 1 October 1936 as 'a former comrade'.¹⁵

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